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JOHN SOMERS.

THE JUNTO

BY

TERESA MERZ
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(GLADSTONE PRIZE 1908),

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

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NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE :

ANDREW REID & COMPANY, LIMITED, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS,
PRINTING COURT BUILDINGS, AKENSIDE HILL.

1907.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

IN venturing to send forth this little book I wish to claim no originality. No new information is therein contained, nor are the facts, already known, represented in a new light. I have merely studied the works of the writers dealing with the period, which I could reach in public and other libraries, selecting those facts which I felt set forth the lives and characters of the five men who formed the Junto. In doing so I hoped that it might possibly be of some small use to historical students.

To Mr. Frewen Lord my sincerest thanks are due, not only for revision and for the Introduction, but for inspiration in the first instance to attempt the task and for encouragement all through.

TERESA MERZ.

THE QUARRIES, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,
August, 1907.

INTRODUCTION.

REIGNING QUEENS, with one sad exception, have always brought luck to England. Their Courts were, without exception, centres of intense political vitality. The reign of Mary Tudor repels alike those who revere, and those who detest, the Reformation. Its political significance is, as yet, hardly appreciated. The passionate conservatism of a Sovereign ruling a populace which was equally conservative, yet more than suspicious of the Queen's foreign prepossessions—produced a tragedy with which we are familiar in outline, but, as yet, only in outline. The reign of Queen Elizabeth was an Age; the reign of Queen Victoria was another Age. We appreciate the first with reasonable accuracy; but we are still too near to the second, which was the complement of the first, to understand it.

There remains the Age of Queen Anne, which is hardly long enough to merit the name of Age; neither can we plausibly derive it from the past, or trace its active influence on the history of its future. It stands alone; rather a brilliant episode than an epoch. Yet so brilliant was it that for two hundred years we have been content to admire without analysing. Frenchmen, naturally perhaps, think less highly than Englishmen of the political and social drama of these twelve years. For them the Age of Anne was but a few years in the Age of their own great Louis. The Queen herself was the "Reine Lune" to the "Roi Soleil" of France.

For Victor Hugo the last Stuart Sovereign was but "*la première femme venue.*" A study on these lines would be valuable, if, indeed, it did not break down for want of evidence; or, perhaps, from the presence of strong evidence to the contrary effect.

For English readers the detail of the picture is sufficiently complicated and attractive. Contemplated in the mass, the outline is imposing. We recall the public magnificence of the reign contrasted with the harrowing private sorrows of the Queen; the irresistible might of Marlborough the soldier, and the humility of Marlborough the man in the presence of his terrific Duchess; the grandeur of the aims of both political parties, and the inconceivable paltriness of their means to their ends; above all, the stake itself—the Crown of England—and the ludicrous contrast of the two claimants; the one young, romantic, but Frenchified and hopelessly untrustworthy, the other grotesque, dull, repulsively German, but solidly equipped with staying qualities, and both, practically, foreigners. These are the more obvious features of the twelve years that we can hardly study too attentively. Withal the period is sufficiently near. Hampton Court and Kensington Palace are still with us. Newmarket is still the Newmarket of Queen Anne; only the horses are changed.

It seems as if there were no second-rate men on this crowded stage. Even those usually counted second-rate acquired a tinge of greatness from their company. Of all the actors in the momentous drama none seem worthier of detailed study than the remarkable group of men known as the Junto. It would be rash to say that they were all first-rate men, but their activity is illuminated with the glamour of success. Not the least interesting aspect of that success is the reflection that it is an early (if not the first) example of the victory of what we have in late years learnt to call the "machine" or the "push." This slang—"Junto" and "Squadron" were once slang)—is the short-

hand of all our political convictions. In the twentieth century the individual is nothing; the party is everything. In the seventeenth century a Monk or a Cromwell could be a real leader; could announce his principles, proceed to take action upon them, and call upon those in the country who agreed with them to rally round his standard.

In the twentieth century our leaders—or rather those who sit in the leaders' seats—have long relinquished this dignified practice. They prefer the tedious processes known as “awaiting a mandate” or “feeling the pulse of the nation.” That these processes are ineffectual, as well as tedious, is clear when we contemplate the monumental blunders which result from following them.

Midway between the real leaders, with the hardly formed “parties” of the seventeenth century and the shadowy figure heads of the twentieth century nominally directing, but really controlled by highly organized “parties,” stands the reign of Queen Anne. On the one hand we have a real leader, St. John, a great man. On the other hand we have a group of men who were not great; but who, for that very reason, comprehended the paramount importance of pettiness. For St. John, party organization was a novel incident; possibly—probably even—a useful contributory factor in the triumph of his principles. For the Junto it was the dominant factor. They could not hope to rival or even to match the genius of St. John; but they might hope to beat him at organization; and they did beat him by organization.

In politics, as in every other sphere except the humblest and most obvious, it is not true that the greater includes the less. On the contrary, the mind occupied with great things cannot see the little things, or, if it sees them, it sees them only in the relation to its own outlook, that is, it sees them in their proper insignificance.

To cherish the insignificant is the secret of modern success; with the result that the large-minded drop out of the contest by process of natural exclusion: the meanest

alone survive. To say that the Junto cherished the insignificant would be an anachronism; but they understood the importance of making room for everybody in the party organization. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that St. John found his party dwindling. It was not a question of principle. The principles of both sides were equally respectable. It was at least as reasonable that Queen Anne should be succeeded on the throne of England by her half-brother, as that she should be succeeded by her second cousin. Neither candidate for the succession had claims to the heroic. But the men who were in public life, or who had any claims to be advanced, were assured of attention and support if they supported King George; while, if they supported King James, they did so at their own risk. Thus we have expressions like "the party goes back rather than forward," "the want of good and able men is incredible," and so forth. "The want of good and able men" might be "incredible," but it was easily explicable. St. John was far too great a man for the details of party organization, Harley was entirely suited to the work; but his energy was wasted in other directions and his self-importance would have stood in the way of his discharging efficiently the duties of a party agent. There remained Robinson—a diplomatist.

We can now turn with advantage to the five men whose attention to detail secured the triumph of the House of Hanover. Few studies can be more instructive than the story of these five men's lives, told as separate episodes. Wharton was born before the execution of Charles the First. He acquired the tastes and the boisterous habits of the Restoration, and was fifty-seven years of age when he definitely joined the Junto. He had every claim to party consideration—wealth, descent, ability. He would be voted "impossible" to-day on account of his manners; but these did not interfere with his career in the days in which his lot was cast. He even wrote. The political status of men "who write" has varied in the history of England. Wharton

was an early example of the contributor to political literature whose writings furthered his success. The reign of Anne was, of course, the Age in which “writing” was a recognised road to political success. This form of mental activity rapidly fell into discredit. It returned to favour with the rise to power of the cultured middle-classes, and has once more fallen into discredit with the disappearance of the serious reading public. Wharton’s “hit” was made with *Lilliburlero*—a typical performance. “*Les pairs d’Angleterre avaient la proie; les pairs de France avaient l’ombre.*” Wharton’s career, and especially his authorship of *Lilliburlero*, is an excellent example of this sensible habit of the aristocracy of England. To the French noble of this epoch the King was all in all. For the English noble—if the King stood in his way he might be “sung out of his kingdom” if singing would conduce to that end. “Opportunism” was the badge of all the Whig tribe; but Wharton was the coarsest, most unscrupulous and most successful of them all. When George the First succeeded, Wharton was old—as old age was then counted—and he lived less than a year as a subject of the Hanoverian dynasty. Seven reigns were included in the span of his intense and successful life. The stages of his career from that of the idle roysterer of 1670 to the Kingmaker, Marquis and Lord Lieutenant of 1715, are here set forth. It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the extraordinary compound of vices which made up his character. Politics—the pursuit of power-dominated all; and to some extent dignified all, even to his abusive good humour and his political horse-racing.

It is hard to say whether anything could dignify the career of Edward Russell, Lord Orford. The triumph of the Junto being essentially the conquest of genius by mediocrity, we must not expect to find first-rate talent in the Councils of the Junto. In fact we find sordid scheming; but immense industry; a noble cause but ignoble methods;

first-rate results, but second-rate men. Russell, Lord Orford, was a great contrast to Wharton. Wharton lived sumptuously, and even extravagantly, he spent lavishly in the service of his party and kept a first-rate racing stable. He held high posts, and no doubt drew large salaries, but power and not money was his object. Russell was a younger son who entered the Navy and followed it as a profession. He wanted money and accumulated as much as possible in the public service. Money to enable him to accept an Earldom and then more money to enable him to support his title—such was the driving force of Russell's career. He was a stout party man, and considered that his services to the party justified his extravagant claims; in point of fact he was insatiable. He was a good sailor, and considered that his services to the Fleet ought to be handsomely rewarded. Nor was his professional capacity shocked by the union of the two posts of Treasurer of the Navy and First Lord of the Admiralty when these two appointments were concentrated in his own desirable person. “To the victors the spoils” he would have said, anticipating Andrew Jackson by one hundred and thirty years. He worked inside the party and exacted the most exorbitant rewards for his services; perhaps his only considerable service was the victory of La Hogue. Wharton, though liberally rewarded, worked first for his party and even financed it handsomely. Russell worked first and last for himself. His massive assertiveness and acquisitiveness were noticed, indeed, and occasionally disapproved; but having none of Wharton's genial blackguardism, he escaped the storms of hatred and abuse that raged wherever Wharton's flamboyant personality dominated public affairs. In fact, selfishness and acquisitiveness being assumed as natural features of a public career, Russell stood out as conspicuously respectable. All the Junto were aristocrats; and of Wharton and Russell we have to observe that they brought to public life immense vitality and hardly anything else. Russell, it is true,

enjoyed whatever advantages might accrue to a young man of good birth by being forced through the training of the Navy. He was technically well-qualified as a sailor.

Halifax, as Charles Montagu, was educated at Westminster and Trinity. At Cambridge he was a pupil of Sir Isaac Newton. He was eight years younger than Russell and thirteen years younger than Wharton. Born under the Commonwealth, he was the grandson of the Protector's Earl of Manchester. It is, of course, hardly necessary to recall his verses, "The Town and Country Mouse," which brought him fame and (what was much more important) patronage. A younger son's younger son could be easily helped, and Charles Montagu found himself at twenty-seven a Member of Parliament and Clerk of the Privy Council with £500 a year to secure his independence—or subservience—according to the point of view.

It is evident that we are here in the presence of a totally different type from either Wharton or Russell. Russell, bent upon "rising in the world," had no other object in life, found the service of the Junto the easiest way to that end, and vulgarised the respectable process of "rising in the world" by his blindness to all other considerations. Wharton grasped place and power and office by the force of his vitality, and justified his insistence by his success. Montagu's career was quite different. His was the case of a very young man who had given evidence of such capacity as a young man may be supposed to possess—he was a fellow of his College and could write tolerable English verse. This is no evidence that he will develop into a great financier; but his patrons assumed that talent was transmutable, and were justified by the event: at thirty-three Charles Montagu was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The immense driving force of vulgarity cannot be overestimated; but, after all, vulgarity is blundering and often blind. It was through Charles Montagu, and such men as his sympathies might be supposed to engage in concert

with him, that the Junto acquired the reputation of intellectual distinction, of sagacity and resource. These rescued it from the fate of ordinary political combination for unworthy ends. Wharton served his party admirably; Russell served himself admirably; Montagu laboured for his country through his party. His counsellors were Isaac Newton, Locke and the great Lord Somers; and his work was nothing less than the foundation of the Bank of England and the reform of the national currency. When we add to these achievements the Presidency of the Royal Society, and the re-organisation of the East India Company, it is clear that we are in the presence of a public servant of the best English type. Montagu was no wire-puller. Although it seems bold, perhaps, we may almost assert that he was no self-seeker. “Neither to seek nor to spurn honours” might have been his noble motto—it certainly described his career. At thirty-nine he was raised to the peerage as Lord Halifax. After recounting his work as a commoner, it is perhaps unnecessary to record that his good work had earned for him the hatred of the stupid. The particular transaction selected as a ground of reproach—(the reservation of a well-paid post for himself)—seems to have been an ordinary transaction when we consider the manners of the age, and his impeachment progressed no further than the Lords; then, as often before and since, the guardian of the nation’s honour from the precipitate and partisan wrath of the Commons.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the binding force of the Junto was its devotion to the principles of 1688. These principles were put to the severest test and achieved their greatest triumph in 1714. In the latter year, Halifax stood forth as their visible embodiment. There was much—only too much—that was repulsive in the careers of the individual members of the Junto; but Halifax represented all that was best in their public conduct. Halifax stood for moderation, for courtesy, for sagacity. He was culti-

vated, industrious, an excellent financier (as we have seen) and a zealous public servant. To say this is not to deprecate the services of others. Probably to drive the creaking and, as yet, hardly developed machine of party organization a force no less coarse and violent than the energy of Wharton was indispensable. Halifax brought charm and distinction, and commended his party in directions where, without his support, it would have been discredited.

The men who worked hardest for the party and who deserved best at the hands of their party and their country survived their triumph a few months only. King George the First landed on the 18th of September, 1714. The Marquis of Wharton died on the 12th of April, 1715. The Earl of Halifax died on the 26th of May, 1715. Lord Somers died on the 26th of April, 1716. Sunderland survived Queen Anne eight years and died on the 19th of April, 1722. Russell lived on till the 26th of November, 1727, but he had retired altogether from public affairs for ten years before his death.

It is the possibility of Somers' existence that makes us understand the greatness of the Junto. Whatever meanness, whatever grossness, whatever blackguardisms were displayed by other members of the Junto, all the members of that famous political committee had this touch of greatness in common—they could appreciate Somers. The great Lord Chancellor made enemies in abundance: he would not have been great if he had not done so. Yet he was the trusted Counsellor of William the Third, and as such did not arouse unworthy suspicions in the minds of his political friends. He was dismissed by William the Third, and did not forfeit that great sovereign's regard. He was brow-beaten by Queen Anne and not discredited. If he thought it worth while to defend himself he could face anyone. Often he did not think it worth while; one does not bandy words with a mocking street boy, or prosecute a rascal whose only chance of distinction lies in the possibility of angering important people.

No doubt the strength of Somers' position lay in the fact that he was a lawyer. It is not with Law as it is with other pursuits. One either knows the Law or one does not. In finance, in letters, in politics, there are always two and often many opinions which are possibly tenable. Not so with the Law. It is true that anyone can become a lawyer, and there have even been poor lawyers who have sat on the Woolsack—Nathan Wright and Bathurst for example. But a great lawyer is a great man; and when a man presents the type of great lawyer with high principles the credit of the age depends on the reception which is accorded to him. If, as has happened, he is elbowed into obscurity the age is a small one. The chief evidence of the greatness of Queen Anne's reign is the immense influence, and even authority, in the country at large of John, Lord Somers. Within the party, whatever there might be of gravity, of dignity, of profundity was contributed by Somers. We have examined in some detail the political attitude of the other members of the Junto—Somers was distinct from them all. It was his fortune to be prominent on the occasion of two changes of the dynasty, the first separated from the second by twenty-five years; on both occasions he was the legal adviser to the more active agents. The declaration of the vacancy of the throne and the Declaration of Rights were two examples of highly complicated questions of the first constitutional importance. The influence of Somers was dominant on both occasions. His immense learning, force of character and clearness of vision saved his party from making blunders and commended their resolutions to the country at large on these occasions as on most others when he co-operated with the Junto.

To no member of the Junto did Somers stand in greater contrast than to Sunderland. Somers was of respectable, but somewhat humble extraction. Sunderland was of the bluest blood of England. Somers was courteous and ingratiating: Sunderland was stupidly and almost madly

SOMERS AS A GREAT
LAWYER

arrogant. Both were learned men, but whereas Somers' learning enriched and dignified a character of natural nobility, Sunderland's learning only added to insane pride of birth an insaner pride of intellect. Somers was a great strength to the Junto; Sunderland, in spite—or rather in consequence—of his energy, was a constant anxiety and source of weakness. Somers accepted things as they were and strove incessantly to better them; Sunderland was full of visionary talk. Somers was well balanced and sincere: Sunderland presented the always ridiculous spectacle of a noble pretending to regret his rank; of an aristocrat who owed everything to his position, but who, nevertheless, chose to masquerade as a Leveller.

It is to be observed, however, that Sunderland was never to be seen except in the most distinguished company. His demagogism, highly offensive as it was, and most offensively expressed, never led him into action. He enjoyed the spoils and the splendour of public life; and, in fact, was unfitted by nature for any other existence. Destitute of humour as of manners he was at once detested and indispensable; not on account of his capacity or industry, but because everybody, with one exception, was afraid of him. He was bought *sans marchander* by his party as the best way of muzzling him; and the only person in the country possessed of the necessary courage to suppress Lord Sunderland was Her Majesty Queen Anne.

THE JUNTO.

JOHN SOMERS.¹

JOHN SOMERS was born at Worcester in an old house called "The White Ladies," on the east side of the Cathedral,² which it is supposed had formerly been part of a monastery. The exact date of his birth cannot be ascertained, as there is no public register.³ During the civil wars between Charles I. and his Parliament, the parish registers were probably either lost or not kept; so it will always be a matter of doubt as to whether he was born in 1650 or 1651.⁴ Somers was by no means "sprung from the dregs of the people,"⁵ as Swift pointed out, eager to depreciate his political rival. His family was highly respectable though not wealthy; and had for several generations owned a small estate in the parish of Severn Stoke in Gloucestershire.⁶ His mother was Catherine Ceavern, of a respectable family in Shropshire.⁶ Sir George Somers—the famous admiral who discovered the Bermudas—was a member of the

¹ There is some doubt as to how Somers spelt his name. In all the entries in the books of the Middle Temple, till he was called to the Bench in 1689, his name is spelt Somer, and then Somers (Campbell, *Lives of Chancellors*, vol. iv. p. 62). He himself sometimes signed his name Sommers, but usually Somers, with a circumflex over the one "m" (Cooksey, *Life of Somers*, p. 122). Somers, however, seems now considered the historical orthography.

² Nash, *History of Worcestershire*, vol. ii. p. 320.

³ Valentine Green in his *History of Worcestershire* says 1650 (p. 218), Macaulay and Campbell both say 1651.

⁴ *Examiner*, No. 26.

⁵ This estate was worth £300 a year, no inconsiderable estate at that period. Maddock, *Life of Lord Somers*, p. 7.

⁶ For pedigree see Nash, *History of Worcestershire*, vol. ii. pp. 54, 55. In the *Dict. Nat. Biog.* her name is given as Severne, and she is said to have come from Powyck, Worcestershire.

same family.⁷ John Somers, the father of the future Chancellor, was an attorney of considerable standing in Worcester. In the civil wars he was a vigorous supporter of Cromwell, under whom he commanded a troop of horse. It is related how he was so exasperated by the clergyman at Severn Stoke, who hurled from the pulpit violent invectives against the Parliamentarians, that he fired a pistol above his head which lodged a ball in the sounding board.⁸

During the civil wars the city of Worcester was zealous for the King, but when buildings of the surrounding parts of the town were destroyed for purposes of defence, White Ladies was held in such veneration by both sides as to be left uninjured.⁹ In this famous house Elizabeth had slept a night in 1585,¹⁰ and here it was that Charles II. stayed during his short time in Worcester, just before the fatal fight of September 3, 1651.¹¹

After the decisive battle of Worcester, Captain Somers resigned his commission and returned to his profession, taking a small house within the city, as White Ladies was occupied by his sister, who had married Mr. Richard Blurton.² In his infancy Somers was adopted by his aunt, who had no son of her own, and he lived with her almost entirely till he went to the University. His earliest educa-

⁷ The islands are called "Somer Islands" after him. They were celebrated for their beauty when explored, though long shunned for their supposed dangers and enchantments, by Waller:—

"Heaven sure has kept that charming spot uncurst
To show how well things were created first."

See Campbell, *Lives of Chancellors*, vol. iv. p. 63, note.

⁸ Cooksey, *Life of Lord Somers*, p. 7.

⁹ March 26th, 1646. "The citizens and soldiers in the town destroyed St. Oswald's Hospital, but spared Mr. Somers's house at the White Ladies, which was a strong stone building capable of holding 500 men with safety." Extract from a MS. of Mr. Townshend of Elmley Lovel, who was in Worcester during the siege and kept a diary. See Cooksey, pp. 7, 117. Also Nash, vol. ii. p. 97, Appendix.

¹⁰ Maddock, *Life of Lord Somers*, pp. 4, 5.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 5.

² For pedigree see Nash, vol. ii. p. 54. Richard Blurton seems to have been an eminent clothier of the city of Worcester. He greatly added to the estate of the White Ladies. Maddock, p. 14.

tion was received at the College School at Worcester, the master of which, at that time, was Dr. Bright, a clergyman of considerable classical attainments. At this school the famous Samuel Butler,³ author of "Hudibras" and Chief Justice Vaughan⁴ were said to have been educated. At a later time Somers appears to have been a pupil at a private school at Walsall in Staffordshire, and also at Sheriff Hales in Shropshire, under a Mr. Woodhouse.⁵ Of this early period of his life little is known. The young Somers seems always to have been very studious and pensive. "He never gave himself any of the diversions of children of his age; for at noon the book was never out of his hand."⁶ He is described by a schoolfellow as a "weakly fellow wearing a black cap, and never so much as looking on when they were at play."⁷ What Somers did on leaving school until he went to the University in 1675 it is difficult to discover. It has been surmised that he was placed in his father's office, destined to follow in his profession.⁸ Whatever his destination may have been, it is quite evident that the hours were not wasted by the studious Somers. During this important period of his life he acquired that profound knowledge of history and constitutional law which formed the groundwork of the mass of learning and accomplishments by which he was afterwards distinguished.

In 1672 began his friendship with the Earl of Shrewsbury.⁹ The estates and finances of his family—the Talbots—were managed by Somers's father; and this brought the young heir to White Ladies, where he resided for some time. But of more importance, perhaps, was the acquaint-

³ *Lives of Eminent Persons*, 1833; *Life of Lord Somers*, p. 1.

⁴ See his life prefixed to his Reports.

⁵ Roscoe, *Eminent British Lawyers*, p. 140. Buck's MSS. Brit. Mus. No. 4223.

⁶ Seward's *Anecdotes*, vol. ii. p. 273.

⁶ Campbell, vol. iv. p. 66.

⁷ Roscoe, p. 141. Charles Talbot, twelfth earl; his father lost his life in a duel with the Duke of Buckingham.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 275.

ance of Sir Francis Winnington,⁴ a distinguished practitioner at the Bar, and afterwards Solicitor-General.¹

He saw how much there was in young Somers. He urged him to study for the Bar, recommending him to go to the University and to direct his studies there with a view to that profession.² His account of Somers at this time is "that by the exactness of his knowledge and behaviour he discouraged his father and all the young men who knew him. They were afraid to be in his company."³

Sir Francis Winnington took the young Somers under his patronage,⁴ and with the reluctant consent of his father carried him off to London, where he was entered as a student of the Middle Temple in 1669.⁵ After a year's private study at his father's house under the supervision of Winnington, Somers began to keep his terms.⁶ In the year 1675 he entered as a commoner of Trinity College, Oxford.⁷ He does not seem to have shown any great signs of ability when there. On May 5, 1676, he was called to the Bar,⁸ but he continued to reside at Oxford, probably going up to London from time to time to keep his terms at the Bar. There is an entry in the Bursar's books of his having given £5 in 1676 towards embellishing the chapel and in 1682 £100 for the same purpose.⁴ Somers took his M.A. degree on June 14, 1681;⁹ but it seems that he did not quit Oxford until 1682,¹⁰ when he removed to London. After the death

¹ In 1674 he was made Solicitor General, and occupied the post till 1679.

² Campbell, vol. iv. p. 68.

³ Seward's *Anecdotes* (4th ed.), vol. ii. p. 275.

⁴ Nash, vol. ii. p. 55.

⁵ Campbell, p. 68, note. May 24th, as in the books of the Middle Temple.

⁶ February 26th, 1669. Campbell, p. 69, note.

⁷ Nash, vol. ii. p. 55. He had matriculated in 1667 (Campbell, p. 66, note).
⁸ Campbell, p. 72.

⁹ Maddock (p. 108) says Somers did take an M.A., but Lord Campbell (p. 83) says he thinks he never took any degree at all, and that the entry of John Somers taking M.A., June 14th, 1681, refers to a John Somers who matriculated March 20th, 1674-1675, a native of Exeter.

¹⁰ Campbell, pp. 83, 84.

of his father in 1680² Somers succeeded to the estate at Severn Stoke. His mother survived her husband many years. On her death in 1709 Somers erected a marble monument in the church with a simple and beautiful inscription to their memory.³

His time at Oxford must have been spent to the greatest advantage, for he left with a sound knowledge of the civil and common law, as well as a thorough knowledge and appreciation of languages and literature. Two different talents were seen to concur in his genius: to an exquisite taste of polite literature was joined a turn to business in the practice of the law. "This," says a critic, "implied solidity of judgment and prompted an industrious application, whilst the other furnished delicacy of sentiment and an elegant diction."⁴

On reaching London in 1682 Somers had already made many friends. Through the Earl of Shrewsbury and Sir F. Winnington he had been introduced to the Earl of Essex, Lord Shaftesbury, Sir Wm. Jones, Algernon Sidney, and several other great patriots and leaders of the opposition to the arbitrary measures of the Court of Charles II.⁵ He was at once carried into the political world, and eager to take his stand on the side of liberty and national freedom which coloured his whole future career. Somers had already employed his pen in the cause of liberty. He had published several treatises on constitutional history and law. As it was his custom, however, to publish such pieces without his name, it is difficult to ascertain which really were his production, and only some are now acknowledged to be his. The first of these was the report of an election case entitled,

² Nash, vol. ii. p. 345.

³ *Ibid.* Nash says that the parents of John Somers "well deserved the character given to them by their son."

⁴ *Biog. Brit.* tit. Somers, p. 3744.

⁵ Somers did not become Whig merely because his friends were. He became Whig by conviction, and eagerly joined this group of eminent Whigs. It seems that Somers was also introduced to Dryden about this time. Campbell, p. 70.

PARL. LIMITATION OF THE
SUCCESSION

"The Memorable Case of Denzil Onslow, Esq., tried at the Assizes in Surrey, July 20, 1681, touching his election at Haslemere in Surrey."⁶ His next publication was one of far greater importance: "A Brief History of the Succession,"⁷ Collected out of the Records and the most Authentic Historians."⁸ This tract was written in support of the famous Exclusion Bill,⁹ by which the Duke of York was to be excluded from the succession. By taking up his stand in its defence Somers declared himself openly a Whig. The different aims of the two parties of Whig and Tory, which played such a large part in the history of the following reigns, were brought to the fore in 1680. Both Whigs and Tories were in favour of government by King and Parliament. But "the Whigs wished to establish a system of government in which the will of the people as expressed in Parliament should be supreme and the power of the monarch should be subject to the limitations it imposed. The Tories, on the other hand, held fervently to the divine right of kings and of the sinfulness of all resistance, and regarded the power of Parliament as altogether subordinate to that of a legitimate king."¹⁰ The object of Somers's tract was to establish the authority of Parliament to limit, restrain or qualify the right of the succession.

Further pamphlets appeared from Somers in 1681. Shortly after the sudden dissolution of the Parliament at Oxford appeared a tract with the title "A Just and Modest

⁶ For this see *Somers's Tracts*, ed. by Walter Scott.

⁷ This tract was reprinted in 1714. *Seward's Anecdotes*, p. 276, note.

⁸ For this see *Somers's Tracts*, ed. by W. Scott, vol. xiii. p. 649. It went through second and third editions.

⁹ The Bill of Exclusion was defeated in the House of Lords by the influence of the Prince of Orange. So long as Mary was to succeed Charles the Prince had been eager for the Bill, but some of the extreme Whigs were now pressing the claims of the Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles, and this turned the Prince against it. But it had accomplished much in spite of failure. Men's eyes were opened to the absurdness of the doctrine "of divine, indefeasible hereditary right."

¹⁰ Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 2.

Vindication of the two last Parliaments,"² which is now ascribed to Lord Somers, although at first Sir Wm. Jones was supposed to have been the author.³ It is a clear argumentation in favour of constitutional doctrines, showing to what extent power was invested in the Commons. The most important, however, was his celebrated tract, "The Security of Englishmen's Lives: or the Trust, Power and Duty of the Grand Juries of England explained,"⁴ called forth by the attempt to prosecute Shaftesbury for treason.

Devoting so much of his time and energies to politics did not induce Somers to put aside his love of the classics. In 1681 he published a translation of some of Ovid's "Epistles" into English verse,⁵ and became the translator of the life of Alcibiades in the version of Plutarch. Altogether he wrote several pieces in verse, but it did not add much to his reputation. An amusing incident is told in connection with one such piece, which Somers had written anonymously. An impudent pretender had the audacity to claim it as his own. He happened to be introduced to Lord Somers—when Chancellor—and was asked by him who wrote the piece in question. "Yes, my lord," he replied, "'tis a mere trifle; I did it offhand." At this his lordship laughed heartily and the false poet withdrew in confusion.⁶

² According to Burnet this pamphlet "had no great effect, the spirit of the party being spent."

³ Lord Hardwicke says that there was a copy of this tract in the handwriting of Lord Somers among the MSS. which were destroyed in the fire at the chambers of the Hon. C. Yorke. *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 399.

⁴ This tract, likewise, was at first attributed to Sir William Jones and other Whig leaders. Burnet says it passed as written by Lord Essex, though he says, "I understood afterwards, it was written by Somers, who was much esteemed, and often visited by Lord Essex, and who trusted himself to him and writ the best papers that came out in that time." *History of His Own Time*, ed. 1833, vol. ii. pp. 297, 298.

⁵ For extracts of his poetry see Maddock, *Life of Somers*, pp. 94-96.

⁶ *Life of Lord Somers*, 1716, p. 124. Seward's *Anecdotes*, p. 277. Mr. Cooksey in his life of Somers asserts that "The Tale of a Tub" was at this time written by Somers and Shrewsbury, "sketching from the life the characters of Peter, Jack and Martin," and afterwards published by Swift. It seems hardly probable. See Cooksey, p. 18 *et seq.*

On settling in London in 1682 Somers immediately began to practise at the Bar.⁷ It has been seen that he was neither without friends nor reputation, and he very soon found opportunities of showing his powers. It was not long before he had a considerable practice.⁸ His wide reading and his willingness to give his leaders the credit of his researches soon made him a general favourite with his seniors.

The circumstance which brought Somers into high repute was the famous trial of the Seven Bishops in 1688,⁹ when he appeared as junior counsel for the accused.¹⁰ That he should have been recommended by Pollexfen, one of the most eminent lawyers of the day, as capable of taking part in such an important case is proof enough that Somers was already looked upon as no second-rate lawyer. Some of the bishops were disinclined to employ so young an advocate,¹ whose powers were so little known; but "old Pollexfen² insisted upon him and would not be himself retained without the other, representing him as the man who would take most pains and go deepest into all that depended on precedents and records." The event which led up to this famous trial was the reckless act of James II. in April, 1688, when he put a further test upon the endurance of the Church by issuing a second Declaration of Indulgence.³ He commanded the clergy of the Established Church to read

⁷ *Lives of Eminent Persons*, 1833, tit. Somers, p. 4.

⁸ In a few years his professional profits amounted to £700 a year, a very large sum for those times. *Life*, 1716, p. 15.

⁹ The first considerable case in which Somers was counsel was the trial of Pilkington and Shute, the sheriffs of London, and others, who were accused of having taken part in riots during the election of sheriffs in 1681. For this see Howell, *State Trials*, vol. ix. p. 187.

¹⁰ For this famous trial see Howell, vol. xii. p. 317.

¹ Mackintosh, *Revolution of 1688*, p. 260.

² Pollexfen, Lord Chief Justice in 1689.

³ "The reneged Declaration of Indulgence which he issued in April, 1688, was not only intended to win the Nonconformists by fresh assurances of the King's sincerity, it was an appeal to the nation at large. 'His resolve,' he said, 'was to establish universal liberty of conscience for all future time.'" Green, *History of the English People*, vol. iv. p. 23.

it from their pulpits on two Sundays.⁴ This was more than they could bear, so seven of the bishops, headed by Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, sent in a petition to the King begging to be excused.⁵ They were at once sent to the Tower, and remained there till three weeks later, when they were tried for libel at the famous trial in question. For the defence of the accused it was necessary to prove that by the ancient constitution of the realm the King had not the right to which he pretended, to suspend or dispense with the execution of Acts of Parliament. Somers, being junior counsel, spoke last; and his part in the defence was less prominent than that of his colleagues. But his speech, as reported in the "State Trials,"⁶ gives an admirable summary of all the arguments which could be gathered to support his clients. He did not speak for much more than five minutes, but every word seems to have been full of weight.⁷ His pleading was masculine and persuasive and made an impression on the jury. "When he sat down his reputation as an orator and a constitutional lawyer was established."⁸ The bishops were acquitted, and the names of their counsel⁹ became popular throughout the kingdom.

The importance of this trial was manifold.¹⁰ It contributed not a little to hurry on the impending revolution.

⁴ The declaration was read in only four of the London churches. Green, *ut supra*.

⁵ For the petition see Rapin, *History of England*, translated by Tindal, ed. 1743, vol. ii. p. 762. The seven bishops were: Sancroft, Archhishop of Canterbury; Lloyd, Bishop of St. Asaph; Kenn of Bath and Wells; Turner of Ely; Lake of Chichester; White of Peterborough; and Trelawny of Bristol. *Ibid.*

⁶ Howell, vol. xii. p. 317. ⁷ Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 382. ⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ The counsel for the bishops was: Sir Robert Sawyer, Mr. Finch, Mr. Pollexfen, Sir George Treby, Sergeant Pemberton, Sergeant Levinz and Mr. Somers. "All of them," said Lord Camden, "lovers of liberty and the greatest lawyers of that age." Birch's MSS. Brit. Mus.

¹⁰ "The prosecution of the bishops is an event which stands by itself in our history. It was the first and last occasion on which two feelings, which have generally been opposed to each other, and either of which, when strongly excited, has sufficed to convulse the State, were united in perfect harmony. Those feelings were love of the Church and love of freedom." Macaulay, p. 392. Shortly after the trial of the Seven Bishops Somers was elected Recorder of London, but declined the office. *Dict. Nat. Biog.* tit. Somers.

KING CAN'T DISSENCE w/ ACTS OF PARL

After the famous trial of the bishops there was not a more unpopular man in England than the King. Everyone was turned against him, and through his folly he had even lost the support of the army.¹¹ The Whig leaders were driven to resist the tyranny of James; even the Tories, "who seriously disclaimed all thought of attacking the Government, were yet by no means inclined to defend it."¹²

The Whigs saw that their time was come. Negotiations with William of Orange were immediately set on foot. Already, in May, Edward Russell² had gone over to the Hague to put before the Prince the urgency of immediate action. William had at a glance seen the importance of the crisis. "Now or never," he exclaimed in Latin.³

How great a share Somers had in this bold enterprise of the Whig party, it is difficult to ascertain. Most of his biographers say that his party was mainly guided by his advice.⁴ He probably took no small part, for William always had the greatest confidence in him. He is said "to have been admitted into the most secret councils of the Prince of Orange and to have been one of those who concocted the measure of bringing him over."⁵ It is certain that his abilities and judgment made his advice very valuable to his colleagues, one of whom, Lord Sunderland,⁶ pronounced him to be "the life, the soul, the spirit of his party."⁷

¹¹ Green, vol. iv. p. 24.

¹² Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 403.

² Edward Russell (1653-1727), the famous admiral, and a member of the celebrated Whig Junto, of which Somers, Montagu (Lord Halifax), Charles Spencer (Lord Sunderland), and Lord Wharton were the other four.

³ "Ant nunc, aut nunquam." Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 404.

⁴ *Vide* Lord Campbell, Maddock, Cooksey, etc.

⁵ Tindal's Continuation of Rapin's "Dissertation sur les Whigs et les Tories," vol. ii. p. 770.

⁶ Robert Spencer, earl of Sunderland, father of Charles, third earl of Sunderland, who was a member of the Whig Junto.

⁷ Hardwick, p. 446.

If Somers had the merit of concocting the bold design, he had in after life the modesty not to boast of it. His name does not appear among the signatures of the "Association," which was drawn up on June 30, 1688, the very day on which the bishops were acquitted, and sent to William, inviting him to come over to free the nation from popery and tyranny. Even when the Prince first landed Somers avoided "making himself conspicuous," though he attended the meetings of the Whig leaders and undoubtedly gave them much assistance.

In January, 1688-1689, he was elected to the Convention Parliament as member for Worcester⁸ and he took a prominent part in the long and difficult debates in that assembly respecting the settlement of the government. The Commons agreed to a resolution drawn up by Somers in the following terms:⁹ "That King James II., having endeavoured to subvert the constitution of this kingdom, by breaking the original contract between the King and the people, and by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons, having violated the fundamental laws and having withdrawn himself out of this kingdom, has abdicated the government, and that the throne has thereby become vacant."¹⁰

The Lords objected to this, and wished to insert the word "deserted" in the place of "abdicated."¹¹ Thereupon followed the famous "Free Conference"¹² between the two Houses (February, 1689), where Somers so brilliantly defended the word "abdicated," using his wide-read knowledge of the classics to illustrate his point, by quoting from

⁸ *Somers's Tracts*, vol. x. p. 13. King in his *Life of Locke* (p. 234) says March 4th, 1689.

⁹ *Parliamentary History*, p. 50. Campbell, vol. iv. p. 91.

¹⁰ Rapin, *History of England*, ed. 1743, 4to, vol. ii. pp. 786, 787.

¹¹ "By far the most illustrious of those who now for the first time took part in debate was Somers, a man to whom immediate precedence was willingly yielded." Cooke, *History of Party*, vol. i. p. 478. "It was Somers' object to make the restoration of a tyrant impossible, and to place on the throne a sovereign under whom law and liberty might be secure." Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 629.

SOMERS' VACANCY RESOLUTION

Grotius, Calvin's "Lexicon Juridicum," Budæus, Pralejus, Spigelius and Brisonius, *de verborum Significatione*.² Probably owing to Somers's arguments, the Lords gave way.³ The Whig party prevailed, and the throne was declared vacant.

Somers was the leading member on the Committee which drew up the celebrated "Declaration of Rights,"⁴ which, with some slight alterations, was accepted by both Houses. After enumerating one by one the chief unconstitutional acts of James II., it declared that the dispensing power did not exist; that without grant or consent of Parliament no money could be exacted by the Sovereign and no army kept up in time of peace. It also affirmed the right of petition, the right of free choice of representatives, the right of Parliament to freedom of debate, the right of the nation to a pure administration of justice, and the necessity, in order to secure these things, of frequent Parliaments. This was read to William and Mary before the Crown was offered to them. They accepted under these conditions, and were proclaimed King and Queen of England. The Declaration of Rights,⁵ which afterwards formed the basis of the Bill of Rights, is one of the most important documents in English history. It destroyed for ever the Stuart theory of the divine right of kings, and it reasserted the principles of the English Constitution, which it had been the aim of the Stuarts to set aside. The name of the man who had

² Rapin observes that this conference was "the most remarkable ever known in England, as well for the importance of the thing itself as for the ability of the managers." Rapin, vol. ii. p. 787. For Somers's speech see Kennet, *History*, vol. ii., or Maddock, p. 214, or Macintosh, *Revolution of 1688*, p. 607, or Rapin, 4to ed., vol. i. p. 787.

³ Campbell, vol. iv. p. 94.

⁴ Green, vol. iv. p. 34. Macaulay says Somers was chairman to the Committee (vol. ii. p. 657). "That he was chosen to so honourable and important a post in a Parliament filled with able and experienced men only ten days after he had spoken in the House of Commons for the first time proves the superiority of his abilities." *Ibid.*

⁵ For Declaration of Rights see Hallam, *Constitutional History*, vol. iii. p. 103.

the largest share in drawing it up ought always to be counted as one of the great names in the annals of England.⁶

Somers's political services, together with his reputation as a sound and accomplished lawyer, naturally pointed him out as a subject of promotion. On the accession of William and Mary he was rewarded for his exertions by being, on May 4, 1689,⁷ made Solicitor-General. He was immediately made a Bencher of the Middle Temple,⁸ and a few months later he was knighted, though by no means willing to receive honours of any kind.⁹

In the debates on the Bill for recognizing the new Sovereigns and ratifying the Act of Convention, Somers took a very prominent part, and distinguished himself by the able manner in which he supported the principles of the Revolution.¹ The legality of the Convention was questioned by the opposition because it had not been summoned by writ, whereupon Somers answered with much spirit: "If it were not a legal Parliament," he said, "they who had taken the oaths exacted by that Parliament were guilty of high treason; the laws repealed by it were still in force; all concerned in levying, collecting or paying taxes under its statutes were highly criminal, and the whole nation must presently return to King James."² "This," says Burnet,³ "he spoke with much zeal and such an ascendant of authority that none was prepared to answer it, so the Bill passed without any more opposition. This was a great service

⁶ "The country is mainly indebted to him for the happy settlement." Foss, *Lives of Eminent Judges*, p. 621. "His famous speech about the word 'abdicated,' one of those deathless monuments of the important services done by his lordship to his country." *Biog. Brit.* p. 3747.

⁷ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 23. "These appointments were not announced in the *Gazette* till May 6th, but some of them were made earlier." In the *Biographical History of England* Noble says May 9th, see tit. Somers.

⁸ Campbell, p. 98, note. ⁹ *Ibid.*

¹ His first official speech.

² Roscoe, p. 151, tit. Somers. Also Campbell, p. 99, and Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 568.

³ Burnet, *Own Times*, vol. iv. p. 75.

done in a very critical time and contributed not a little to raise Somers's character."

Somers was from this time without doubt the leader of the Whig party, whose supremacy he laboured to secure. As long as William placed in him the confidence he did, the Whigs were safe, but William was beginning to see the difficulties of his position between the jealousies of the two parties. The Tories were forced to be content with William, for they saw that there was no choice between him and ruin. But William could hope for no support from them. "If he persecuted them their sulkiness would infallibly be turned into fury. If he showed favour to them it was by no means certain that he would gain their goodwill, and it was but too probable that he might lose his hold on the hearts of the Whigs."⁴ Whig and Tory had been united by the tyranny of James; both parties had shared in the revolution, and William strove to prolong their union by joining the leaders of both in his first ministry. Except in the face of some common danger, union was impossible, as William was soon to discover.

During the period that Sir John Somers occupied the post of Solicitor-General he helped to carry through the Toleration Act,⁵ and he took part in the important debate as to whether the revenue granted during the life of King James had expired. His argument that it expired with the abdication of the King carried the day, and by his suggestion an Act "granting a present aid to their majesties" was passed.⁶ Somers also supported an amendment to the Coronation oath, which was not carried;⁷ and helped in the

⁴ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 12.

⁵ The Nonconformists had played an important part in the Revolution, and were now rewarded by a Bill, the Toleration Act, which allowed freedom of worship to Protestant Nonconformists.

⁶ See Grey, *Debates*, p. 93.

⁷ If Somers's amendment had been carried "it would have saved much unnecessary pain to royal consciences, and would have deprived bigotry of an unfair weapon." *Vide* Campbell, p. 100. "This amendment, if carried, would have relieved George III. of one of his scruples in regard to the emancipation of his Catholic subjects." *Dicit. Nat. Biog.* tit. Somers.

important reform of appropriating the revenue to the public service, besides many other constitutional changes, which it is impossible to enumerate here. In all Somers held to his principles and worked for liberty. Only one instance, says Lord Campbell,⁸ can be found where "he maintained an unconstitutional and dangerous doctrine." This was on the occasion when he argued that Parliament could judicially declare new treasons.

In the absence of the Attorney-General it fell upon Somers to conduct the case for the Crown in the prosecution of Lord Preston for high treason in January, 1691.⁹ Lord Preston, James II.'s last Secretary of State, with several others,¹⁰ was discovered to have been leader of a plot to overthrow the Government and restore the exiled King. He was declared guilty before the Lord Chief Justices Holt and Pollexfen and the Lord Chief Baron, Sir Robt. Atkyns.¹¹ On the recommendation of Somers, however, Lord Preston received a free pardon.²

On May 2, 1692, Somers succeeded Sir George Treby as Attorney-General,³ and in the following March he was

⁸ Campbell, p. 101. "Somers's action has been censured by Lord Campbell on inadequate grounds. The chief point to which he took exception in the amendments was a limitation of ten days for the presentment of the indictment, to run not from the discovery but from the commission of the offence. Such a rule would have rendered it in many cases impossible to lay an indictment at all, and the measure as eventually passed (7 William III. c. 3) justified Somers's opposition by fixing the period of limitation at three years." *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

⁹ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 17 *et seq.* This was the first State prosecution since the Revolution.

¹⁰ Of which the chief were Ashton and Elliott. For account of this plot see Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, 4to ed. vol. i. p. 166 *et seq.*

¹¹ Howell, vol. xii. p. 645.

² "The Solicitor General, Somers, conducted the prosecutions with a moderation and humanity of which his predecessors had left him no example. 'I did never think,' he said, 'that it was the part of any who were of counsel for the King in cases of this nature to aggravate the crime of the prisoners or to put false colours on the evidence.'" See Macaulay, also Howell.

³ Sir Henry Pollexfen, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, died in April, 1692. Sir George Treby was raised to his office, which left the post of Attorney General vacant.

appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, at the same time being sworn one of William's Privy Council.⁴ The rapid promotion of Somers to such an important post gave satisfaction to all except the violent Tories, who were afraid of his influence over William. They could now no longer deny his ability, and from henceforth their jealousy grew more and more pronounced. Burnet remarks on the general satisfaction: "All people were now grown weary of the Great Seal's being in commission: it made the proceedings in Chancery to be both more dilatory and more expensive. . . .

. . . Sir John Somers had now got great reputation, both in his post of Attorney-General and in the House of Commons: so the King gave him the Great Seal. He was very learned in his own profession, with a great deal more learning in other professions, in divinity, philosophy and history. He had a great capacity for business, with an extraordinary temper; for he was fair and gentle, perhaps to a fault, so that he had all the patience, as well as the justice and equity becoming a great magistrate. He had always agreed in his notions with the Whigs, and had studied to bring them to better thoughts with the King, and to greater confidence in him."⁵

Somers presided in the Court of Chancery as Lord

⁴ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 375. He was sent for to Kensington, and called into the Council Chamber. Caermarthen spoke in the King's name. "Sir John," he said, "it is necessary for the public service that you should take this charge upon you; and I have it in command from His Majesty to say that he can admit of no excuse." Somers submitted. The seal was delivered to him, with a patent which entitled him to a pension of £2,000 a year from the day on which he should quit the office; and he was immediately sworn in a Privy Councillor and Lord Keeper. *Ibid.* "The Attorney General, Somers, made Lord Keeper, a young lawyer of extraordinary merit." Evelyn's *Diary*, March 19th, 1693. "The great seal, the highest legal office, now given to Somers, a discerning and moderate man, but at the same time a declared Whig, whose excellency all lay in his own department—the law." Ranke, vol. v. p. 66. "No appointment could be more popular or more judicious. Somers was a man of strict integrity, of great capacity for business, of the mildest and most engaging manners, of the most generous and liberal principles." Belsham, *History of Great Britain*, vol. i. p. 272.

⁵ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 193. This exceedingly high praise, we must remember, comes from a man with very strong Whig bias. But it nevertheless seems to have been the general opinion of Somers.

Keeper for seven years, and all contemporary authorities, even from unprejudiced men of the Tory section, concur in praising his energy, his patience and his upright and conscientious adherence to his principles.⁶ Of many cases brought before him during the seven years by far the most important was the Banker's Case.⁷ On this occasion he delivered his celebrated judgment, which Mr. Hargrave describes as one of the most elaborate arguments ever delivered in Westminster Hall. It is said that Somers bought several hundred pounds' worth of books and pamphlets in order to obtain material for his argument.⁸

The career of Somers as a judge was a brilliant one; but it was his career as a member, and a very active member,⁹ of the Government that attracted most public notice.

Almost immediately after receiving the Great Seal, Somers had a dispute with the King concerning the choice of an Attorney-General, and some other legal appointments. The Lord Keeper had promised the post of Attorney-General to Sir Th. Trevor, but William had given instructions that it should be bestowed upon Mr. Ward.¹⁰ Somers, thereupon, wrote a very respectful letter¹ to the King, urging the ancient custom with regard to these appointments, stating that it was to the best interest of His Majesty that they should be dependent on the Great Seal. He finally stated that he could not hold the Great Seal unless under the

⁶ "One of the ablest lawyers of the day, and the most impartial judge that ever presided in the Court of Chancery." Trevor, *Life of William III.*, vol. ii. p. 343.

⁷ Howell, vol. xiv. p. 1 *et seq.* This case arose out of the infamous shutting up of the Exchequer in the reign of Charles II., whereby the King intercepted, for his own private uses, nearly a million and a half of money which should have been applied to the repayment of loans to the Government.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 39.

⁹ He had been returned member for Worcester.

¹⁰ See letter from Nottingham to Somers dated March, 1693. Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 426.

¹ For letter see Hardwicke, *ut supra*, p. 426. Letter dated March 27th, 1693.

proper conditions. William refused to accept his resignation of the Seal, and promised that in future all such appointments should be in the hands of the Lord Keeper. This dispute only tended to create an even better understanding between the King and his great minister, which was never again destroyed.

On May 2, 1693, Somers took his seat on the Woolsack as Speaker of the House of Lords.² In this capacity he took no part in the debate, but he very largely regulated the decisions of the Upper House, and the King consulted him on everything, particularly on the question of giving the royal assent or vetoing bills.³

During all these discussions on home policy, William's attention was constantly turned to the Continent. England had been at war with France since 1689, and James and Louis were together planning to invade England. This scheme, which was James's last hope, was entirely destroyed by the famous Battle of La Hogue on May 19, 1692.⁴ William often crossed over to the Continent and left Mary to rule, trusting a good deal, no doubt, to the able advice of Somers, the minister on whom he most relied.

To meet the expenses of the French war some important steps with regard to finance were taken in the beginning of 1693; on which occasion the abilities of Charles Montagu,⁵ a young and rising Whig, were called into play. He originated the National Debt, and through his important services to the State he and Somers came into close contact. In

² Under date May 2nd, 1693, there is an entry in the journals of the Lords : "This day Sir John Somers, Knight, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, first sat as Speaker in the House of Peers."

³ Campbell, p. 122.

⁴ Edward Russell, afterwards one of the Whig Junto, was commander-in-chief. This decisive victory considerably helped to raise his reputation. For the details of the struggle see Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 225 *et seq.*

⁵ Charles Montagu (1661-1715), afterwards one of the Whig Junto. He and Somers took their seats for the first time together. Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 623.

1694, the Triennial Act,⁶ limiting the duration of Parliament to three years, was passed. Somers persuaded William to give his assent, pointing out to him that its provisions were quite consistent with the full exercise of the prerogative in a limited monarchy. Very soon after this was settled William was struck down by the death of Mary from smallpox on December 20, 1694.⁷

Somers immediately saw the necessity of reconciling William to the Princess Anne, who by the Bill of Rights was his successor. She had, owing to a quarrel,⁸ been for long a stranger at the Court. He approached the King in his royal closet, where he found him prostrate with grief. When Somers broke the silence by saying he so regretted the dissensions in the royal family, William answered, "My lord, do what you will; I can think of no business." Somers arranged an interview between the King and the Princess which ended in a complete reconciliation.⁹

⁶ "The enormous duration of 17 years, for which Charles II. protracted his second Parliament, turned the thoughts of all who desired improvements in the Constitution towards some limitation on a prerogative which had not hitherto been abused. The term of 3 years appeared sufficient to establish a control of the electoral over the representative body without recurring to the ancient but inconvenient scheme of annual Parliaments which men enamoured of a still more popular form of government than our own were eager to recommend." The Triennial Bill was brought up in 1689, 1693, and finally received the royal assent in 1694. See Hallam, *Constitutional History*, vol. iii. pp. 148, 149. Also Macaulay, vol. iv. pp. 477, 529.

⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 530, 531, 532. Also Tindal, Continuation of Rapin, vol. i. p. 260. Also Burnet.

⁸ In 1691, uncertain of the stability of the new Government, three of the greatest of the ministers, Russell, Godolphin, and Marlborough, determined to be safe on either issue. They succeeded in obtaining written pardons from James, Marlborough promising in exchange, when he should be in command of the English troops, to bring them over to the enemy. William heard of their treachery and deprived Marlborough of all offices (Jan. 10th, 1692). Anne, who knew well the reason of his disgrace, persisted in ignoring it and in bringing the Duchess of Marlborough to Court. This led to a bitter quarrel between the Queen and her sister, Princess Anne. See Macaulay, vol. iv. pp. 158-170.

⁹ Macaulay, vol. iv. pp. 562-566. Tindal (vol. i. p. 223) in Continuation of Rapin says Sunderland had the chief hand in the reconciliation. William did not at first include the Churchills in the peace which he had made with their mistress. But they were permitted once more to dwell under the royal roof. Macaulay, p. 565. For further account of this reconciliation see *Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 254; Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 74.

Somers further gained the confidence of the King. In 1695 he was appointed one of seven lord justices¹⁰ who were to form a council of Regency during William's absence on the Continent, when he took command of the army in the Netherlands.¹ Of the seven only one—Godolphin—was Tory; so Somers, being the head of his party, became practically supreme in the absence of the King.

The most important work in the Parliament of 1695 was the re-establishment of the currency. The evil practice of clipping² had by slow degrees grown to a dangerous magnitude. To no purpose severe laws against clipping were rigorously executed. On one morning seven men were hanged and one woman burned.³ But clipping still went on. So far had the evil gone that the coinage was no more than half its proper weight. In 1695 the Government saw that something must be done at once.⁴ Fortunately the transaction of this business was entrusted to four able and determined men,⁵ Somers, Locke⁶ the philosopher, Montagu the financier, and Sir Isaac Newton the mathematician, who was made Master of the Mint. They decided upon immediate action.⁷ Somers made a very ingenious sugges-

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 562. The seven Lord Justices were: Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury; Somers, Keeper of the Great Seal; Pembroke, Keeper of the Privy Seal; Devonshire, Lord Steward; Dorset, Lord Chamberlain; Shrewsbury, Secretary of State; and Godolphin, First Commissioner of the Treasury. "They had no rank or character except when four of them were together, and when together they had regal authority vested in them." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 269. See also Tindal, Continuation of Rapin, vol. i. p. 281.

¹ Somers filled this post again in the years 1697, 1698.

² In those days the coin was not made with a serrated or milled edge as it is now, but with a smooth edge, so it was not easy to see whether a little had been cut off the edge or not.

³ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 623. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 629. ⁵ *Ibid.* p. 630.

⁶ For Locke's share in this important service to the State, see his life by Fox Bourne, vol. ii. p. 325 *et seq.*

⁷ Montagu, in particular, is said to have expressed in strong language his determination to kill or cure. During the first fortnight of November (1695) Locke, Somers and Montagu were in constant communication, discussing the terms of the proposal to be submitted to Parliament. They were all agreed as to the madness of any attempt to adulterate the coinage. They were also agreed as to the necessity of calling in the clipped money, and rendering its use, after a short time, illegal.

tion⁸ that a proclamation should be prepared with great secrecy, saying that in three days the hammered coin should pass by weight only but that every possessor of such coin might bring it to the Mint, where it should be counted and weighed and immediately restored with a written promise of a future payment of the difference between the actual quantity of silver in the pieces and the real value of the coin. The King agreed with Somers in this bold plan,⁹ but the other politicians shrank from the responsibility. It was therefore abandoned and another plan was adopted. They called in the bad coins and gave others of the same name but of the full value to those who brought them. The nation paid the cost of difference.¹⁰ By this entire renewal of the coinage a great boon was conferred on trades of all kinds.¹¹

In May, 1695, William offered Somers a peerage. There was a great desire among the peers that he should be able to take part in the debates of the House of Lords, and the King sent the offer through the Duke of Shrewsbury, who it was thought could persuade Somers to accept it. He wrote the following letter, enclosing the warrant of a baronetcy:—

MY LORD,—I had his Majesty's commands last night to have waited on your Lordship this morning with the enclosed; but being informed that you are not at home, I take the liberty to send it to you. I had directions to have said everything I could imagine to persuade you to accept of a title, and the King is really convinced it is for his service you should. I beg the answer I may have may be a Bill for the King's signing. As for arguments, I have used all I have already; and by your objections, you may give me leave to tell you, that you are partial and unreasonable with too much

⁸ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 635.

⁹ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 264. The course Somers recommended was indeed the safest for the country, but by no means the safest for him and his colleagues. Macaulay, *ibid.* p. 636.

¹⁰ £1,200,000 was required to meet the expense. This was borrowed from the Bank of England on the security of a window-tax. Locke, vol. ii. p. 337.

¹¹ “The reformation of the currency was only one of the great services that Somers and Montagu, as the ablest and most active members of the Government that was re-shaped in the spring of 1695, rendered to their country.” *Ibid.* p. 346.

modesty, as some are with too much ambition. I hope you will not only pardon me for telling you your fault, but that you will correct it and believe me with great truth, My Lord, your Lordship's most faithful and obedient servant,—SHREWSBURY.¹²

In spite of this pressing letter, Somers still modestly refused, declaring that he had not sufficient fortune to support the dignity.¹³

A plot to assassinate the King was discovered at the beginning of 1696. Somers's treatment of the conspirators was not much complained of at the time, but it was brought up later when his enemies were anxious to find some charge against him.¹ The trial and infamous attainder of Sir John Fenwick really became a question of party² and does not reflect much credit on the memory of Somers, who was mainly responsible for the decision.³

On April 22, 1697, Somers surrendered the Great Seal, but William returned it to him immediately with the title of Lord Chancellor,⁴ at the same time raising him to the peerage with the title of Baron Somers of Evesham.⁵ William granted him an annuity of £2,100 and the manors of Reigate and Howleigh in Surrey,⁶ which would enable him to support his new dignity. By making Somers Lord Chancellor William had bestowed on him the very highest mark of honour and respect at his disposal. The world now saw Lord Somers at the height of his power.⁷ His

¹² This letter dated May 8, 1695. Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 429.

¹³ *Lives of Eminent Persons*, tit. Somers, p. 7.

¹ Campbell, p. 128.

² Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 740. "In truth party spirit had seldom been more strongly excited." "The Whigs had a decided superiority in argument, but on the main question the Tories were in the right." *Ibid.* p. 745. See also Hallam, vol. iii. p. 131.

³ Campbell, p. 128.

⁴ "His Majesty in Council received the Seals from the hands of the Right Honourable Sir John Somers, Knight, Lord Keeper thereof, and was pleased to return it to him again, with the title of Lord Chanoellor of England." *London Gazette*, April 22nd, 1697.

⁵ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 776.

⁶ Vernon, *Correspondence*.

⁷ His influence was now as great in the House of Lords as in the Cabinet. Cooke, *History of Party*, vol. i. p. 534.

party triumphed with him. The chief offices of the Crown were given to Whigs—Russell became Lord Orford, Montagu, First Lord of the Treasury.⁸

It is necessary to glance over the years of William's reign in order to understand the manner in which the Whigs gained their ascendancy. It has been seen that William began his reign by forming a government from members of both parties, hoping thereby to reconcile them. This plan had, however, been a complete failure; every Parliament had been characterized by violent feuds. William had, at the very outset, displeased the Whigs by appointing a few Tories and Trimmers⁹ to high positions.¹⁰ The Whigs showed their indignation by growing more and more violent, which behaviour by no means added to their popularity. Seeing that they were growing less popular with both King and nation, they resolved to make a bold attempt to become independent of both and to secure their own personal supremacy in Parliament. In October, 1689, on the opening of Parliament, they introduced a Corporation Bill¹ for restoring all the charters² that had been forfeited in James II.'s reign, to which were added two clauses,³ the result of which, if passed, would have been to give the Whigs an overwhelming influence in borough elections.

⁸ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 776. The Whig policy at this moment was the policy of the nation. As the Whigs drove their rivals out of the field they at the same moment entered on a still closer community of interests with the King. Ranke, vol. v. p. 126.

⁹ Amid the clamours of Whigs and Tories and during the storm of their hostilities, a middle or moderate party gradually and silently arose, and, fostered by circumstances, attained a powerful ascendancy. These were called "Trimmers." Robert Harley was leader of this new and powerful schism from the Tory school of politics.

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 404. ¹ *Ibid.* p. 517.

² Somers had been chairman of a select committee to consider their restoration.

³ These two clauses were the work of Sacheverell and Howard. The one provided that all who had taken part in the surrender of the charters should be incapable of holding office for seven years; the other added that all who presumed to take office should be fined £700 and debarred from public office for life. "This was no doubt intended to maintain their own superiority by keeping the Church or Tory faction out of corporations." Hallam, vol. iii. p. 114.

This the Whigs tried to pass in haste, at a time when the greater part of the opposition were not in the House. So violent a measure, however, called forth all the energies of the Tories, and the Whigs were defeated. "That Somers disapproved of the violence of the party to which he belonged may be inferred, both from the whole course of his public life, and from the very significant fact that, though he had charge of the Corporation Bill, he did not move the penal clauses, but left that ungracious office to men more impetuous and less sagacious than himself. He did not, however, abandon his allies in this emergency, but spoke for them, and tried to make the best of a very bad case."⁴

Further disputes followed, until William, weary of the Crown, threatened to retire to Holland. To put an end to difficulties, he abruptly dissolved the Parliament which he could not bring to reason.⁵

In the Parliament of 1690 the Tories had a majority,⁶ which exasperated the Whigs; but during the next two years the Whigs, to a certain extent, regained their position. This unsettled state of affairs continued till 1693, when Sunderland,⁷ the able but unscrupulous minister of James

⁴ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 522. Hallam says that this clause (Sacheverell's), which modern historians generally condemn as oppressive, had the strong support of Somers. See Hallam, vol. iii. p. 114.

⁵ "The Tories hated him for protecting the Dissenters, and the Whigs hated him for protecting the Tories." Macaulay, vol. iii. pp. 528, 531.

⁶ "The Whig element had decidedly predominated in 1689. The Tory element predominated, though not very decidedly, in 1690." Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 537.

⁷ Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, father of Charles, third Earl of Sunderland, afterwards member of the Junto. He was a man whose political character was of the lowest type. "He had been a minister in the later days of Charles II., and he had remained minister through almost all the reign of James II. He had held office at last only by compliance with the worst tyranny of his master and by a feigned conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, but the ruin of James was no sooner certain than he had secured pardon and protection from William by the betrayal of the master to whom he had sacrificed his conscience and his honour. Since the Revolution he had striven only to escape public notice in a country retirement, but at this crisis he came secretly forward to bring his unequalled sagacity to the aid of the King." See also Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 438 *et seq.* Green, vol. iv. p. 59.

II., advised William to form a united Whig ministry by gradually weeding out the Tories. In this manner the first English ministry was formed.⁸ By the end of 1696, except for Godolphin, the able financier, who did not precisely belong to either party, all the chief offices of the Crown were filled by Whigs.⁹ William decided to give the preference to them for three reasons.¹⁰ In the first place, the Whigs were, on principle, attached to the reigning dynasty. The Revolution had been the triumph of their political theory. In the second place, they were prepared to support William while the Tories were rather inclined to thwart him; and in the third place, the Whigs were the stronger party in Parliament. Ever since 1690, when they had been in the minority, they had been steadily gaining ground. In energy, alertness and discipline they were decidedly superior to the Tories.¹ The reason of the strength of the Whig party lay in the fact that they had already begun to look for guidance to that small group of men, afterwards known as the Junto.²

Sooner even than 1697 four³ of those five distinguished men, Somers, Russell, Montagu and Wharton,⁴ had begun to take the lead of their party. As the years went on they

⁸ "The first ministry was the work, partly of mere chance, and partly of wisdom, not however of that highest wisdom which is conversant with great principles of political philosophy, but of that lower wisdom which meets daily exigencies with daily expedients. Neither William nor the most enlightened of his advisers fully understood the nature and importance of that noiseless revolution—for it was no less—which began about the close of 1693 and was completed about the close of 1696." Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 437.

⁹ "As the Whigs drove their rivals—the Tories—out of the field, they at the same time entered on a still closer community of interests with the King." Ranke, vol. v. p. 126.

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 444 *et seq.*

¹ *Ibid.* p. 446.

² It was not until the reign of Queen Anne that this name was given to the group of men which lead the Whig party.

³ The fifth was Charles Spencer, third Earl of Sunderland (1674-1722), who afterwards became son-in-law to Marlborough. He was the youngest of the Junto.

⁴ Thomas Wharton, eldest son of Philip, Lord Wharton, afterwards first Marquis of Wharton (1648-1715).

gradually gained more and more power and authority, and continued to possess it, whether in office or out of office, during twenty years. Their strength lay in union. They acted in close concert, and rose and fell together. Whatever the members of the Junto could be accused of, they could never be accused of treachery one to another. At the head of this united body stood Somers. He was chief of his party.

Very different was the state of the Tory party. It could boast of no such able leaders, nor of any such cohesion. The most eminent of their men was, perhaps, Robert Harley,⁵ who in the next reign was to play such an important part. Although he came from a Whig Puritan family, and, on first taking his seat in Parliament, displayed pronounced and violent Whig principles,⁶ he gradually took his stand on the side of those whose principles were diametrically opposite to those which he himself professed. Soon after the general election of 1690 he began to turn Tory, until finally, under Anne, his name came to be inseparably associated with the High Church party.

Godolphin, the able financier, who had been in high office throughout the late reign, continued one of the chief ministers when William came to the throne. In 1690 he was made First Lord of the Treasury, and scruples about serving one King while secretly sending professions of loyalty to another seemed easily overridden. He was the only Tory of note whom William kept in office when he formed the ministry of 1696. Godolphin, however, did not very much care what principles he professed, so long as he could remain in power. He gradually came under the influence of Marlborough,⁷ to whom he was afterwards

⁵ In Anne's reign created Earl of Oxford.

⁶ His name appears on the list of those who voted for Sacheverell's clause in the Corporation Bill (*supra*, p. 48).

⁷ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 58.

closely bound by domestic ties;⁸ and these two unprincipled men concocted schemes for their own advancement.

Somers, when first made Lord Chancellor, seemed eminently popular. He was the favourite of the King; he was the favourite of both Houses of Parliament. "The High Church party expressed a wish that he was theirs. The Tory fox-hunters could say nothing against him except that he was "a vile Whig"; and the merchants celebrated him as the only Lord Chancellor who had ever known anything of trade or finance."⁹ But his situation in the ministry was difficult and critical; and he was soon to learn, like many other eminent men, that no public services, however conscientiously pursued, can secure the lasting gratitude of the multitude, or protect the author of them from the fluctuations of party feeling. At no period, perhaps, in the history of England did the inconsistencies and absurdities of party spirit run so high or the interests of the rival factions lie so wholly in the struggle for power as they did at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries.

William, torn between the parties, had several times threatened to resign the Crown and return to his own country. "The only difference," he declared to Halifax, "that he knew between the two parties was that the Tories would cut his throat in the morning and the Whigs in the afternoon."¹⁰

Lord Somers tried to check the violence of his party, and acted altogether with such moderation as to become of the very greatest importance to the King as adviser and friend. After the resignation of the Earl of Sunderland in 1697,¹¹ the chief power of the Government rested in the

⁸ He married Marlborough's daughter.

⁹ Campbell, vol. iv. p. 133.

¹⁰ *Lives of Eminent Persons*, tit. Somers, p. 8.

¹¹ In 1697 he was made Lord Chamberlain in place of Dorset, who resigned, and took his place as one of the Lord Justices. Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 777. This appointment was strongly resented, even the Whig Junto, though they owed him much, shrank from his defence. He was attacked and in great fright resigned. For this see Macaulay, vol. v. p. 18 *et seq.*

hands of the Lord Chancellor. From that date his troubles began. A letter written by Somers to Shrewsbury² in that year shows how he himself realized the instability of the administration:—"At the present he (the King) is without anything which has the appearance of a ministry. The plain consequence of which is, that everybody (seeing the little credit those have who serve him) is in a manner united to endeavour to ruin or expose them. If one could have his wish, it is very hard to find men to supply even present vacancies; especially considering the King's prejudices to some, and his fondness for others, and the power which my Lord Sunderland still has. There is nothing to support the Whigs but the difficulty of his piecing with the other party, and the almost impossibility of finding a set of Tories who will unite." But the Tories were determined to unite, and to unite for the purpose of ousting Somers from his influential position. They realized that as long as he possessed the entire confidence of the King, they could never hope for power;³ and they grew more and more indifferent to the means they employed to recover their power.

Seven years of war and war-taxes had made the English nation discontented with the Whigs, to whom the war was a matter of party principle. The first incident in their favour was the dispute about a standing army, which followed the Peace of Ryswick⁴ in 1697. The Commons

² This letter is not dated, but Hardwicke supposes it to have been written towards the close of 1698. Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 435.

³ "It was reckoned that the chief strength of his party lay in his credit with the King." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 442.

⁴ Signed in October, 1697. Green, vol. iv. p. 65. This peace was a defeat for the grasping king of France, Louis XIV., and a triumph for William and the European coalition, in spite of failure and defeat in the field. Louis, making terms with England, Holland, Spain and Austria, surrendered all that he had gained since 1678, with the single exception of the town of Strasburg. He also was compelled to recognize William as lawful king of England, though he refused to expel James II. and his family from St. Germaine, where they had been living since 1691. Green, *ut supra*; also Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 801; also Tindal, Continuation of Rapin, 4to ed. vol. i. p. 360.

voted "that all the land forces of the kingdom that had been raised since September 29, 1680, should be paid and disbanded." In answer to this an anonymous pamphlet appeared entitled: "A Letter⁵ Balancing the Necessity of Keeping a Land Force in Time of Peace, with the Dangers which may follow therefrom"; which was thought by all to come from the Lord Chancellor.⁶

Tories, and even the majority of Whigs, were very reluctant to see the establishment of a standing army.⁷ The King, with his eyes fixed abroad, with a deep distrust of France, and the fear of another approaching continental quarrel, was loth to break up his well-trained army.⁸ Somers, with his far-sighted policy, thought the same and urged the retention of a body of well-trained troops. The antipathy of the nation to a regular army was, however, too strong. Somers was defeated.⁹ William,¹⁰ prevented from appearing to the Continent in a state of preparation for future emergencies, grew disgusted with the Whig party, which could not give him what he most desired. As the Tories hoped, their party grew more and more in the favour of the King. Several high offices were given to them in the place of eminent Whigs.

Lord Somers, however, still retained the confidence of the King. His enemies could find nothing in him to attack.

⁵ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 11.

⁶ "In vain Somers strove by skilful pamphleteering to convince the people that in face of the continental armies the nation could not be safe without regular troops, and that the militia on which patriots relied, whatever might be its native valour, would not stand against trained soldiers." Goldwin Smith.

⁷ "The word 'standing army' had an odious sound in English ears." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 375. "The Whigs in the House of Commons were much divided about this point of the army." Hardwicke's note, *ibid.* p. 376.

⁸ "The king resisted desperately the proposals for its disbanding." Green, vol. iv. p. 68.

⁹ The army was reduced to 10,000 men. Hallam, vol. iii. p. 139.

¹⁰ "It was surmised that he would abandon the government rather than hold it with a force that was too small to preserve and protect it." Ralph says that this was probably only a threat, but Somers in a letter to Shrewsbury confirms it; see Burnet, vol. iv. p. 400, note.

It was his share in the Partition Treaties—the first of which was signed on October 11, 1698—that gave them their first opportunity.

After the elections of 1698, which resulted in a decided thinning of the ranks of the staunch ministerial Whigs,¹ the statesmen of the Junto, disappointed and anxious but not hopeless, dispersed to rest and to prepare for future parliamentary struggles. Somers went to Tunbridge Wells.²

Before the King had departed to Holland in the summer of 1697, he had communicated to Lord Somers a proposition made by Count Tallard³ to prevent a war about the succession to the crown of Spain upon the death of the reigning monarch, Charles II., who, it seemed probable, would not live much longer, and who had no direct heir. The claimants to the Spanish throne were Philip of France,⁴ Joseph, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, and the Archduke Charles of Austria. William, anxious at all costs to prevent the union of the French and Spanish colonies and to check the menacing aggrandisement of France in Europe, eagerly entered into negotiations⁵ by which the largest share would be given to the Electoral Prince, whom no one feared. He wrote home to Somers, informing him that fresh offers had been made, desiring to have his opinion on the treaty. The particulars of the propositions were sent to Vernon, Secretary of State, “to whom” (wrote William to Somers⁶) “I have given orders not to communicate them to any others besides yourself, and to leave to your judgment to whom else you would think proper to impart them, to the end that I might know your opinion upon so important an affair, and which requires the greatest secrecy. If it be fit this negotia-

¹ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 130.

² *Ibid.* p. 131.

³ French ambassador; in England in 1698.

⁴ The Dauphin's second son.

⁵ The contracting parties were England, Holland and France.

⁶ For letter see Trevor, *Life of William III.*, vol. ii. p. 350. For William's letter and Somers's reply, see Tindal, Continuation of Rapin, 4to ed. vol. i. pp. 383, 384.

tion should be carried on, there is no time to be lost, and you will send me the full powers under the Great Seal, with the names in blank, to treat with Count Tallard. I believe this may be done so secretly that none but you and Vernon, and those to whom you shall have communicated it may have knowledge of it," etc.

Somers immediately consulted his colleagues, Lord Orford, the Duke of Shrewsbury and Montagu, all of whom very much doubted the wisdom of sanctioning such proposals. Somers despatched their joint opinion to the King.⁷ He remarked on the evil consequences with which the proposal would be attended should the French not be sincere, though at the same time they were anxious to have the question of the Spanish succession speedily settled, for there was great danger that the immense power of the French King and the commanding position of his dominions would enable him to take immediate possession of Spain when Charles II. might die. But there was one important point which he laid before the King: England was discontented with the heavy taxes and very averse to another war.⁸ With these cautionary remarks, Somers concluded by saying that they were all assured that William would consider all points, feeling confident that he understood all the conditions and would not act rashly. The Commission was sent off with the powers demanded by the King, blanks being left for the names of the Commissioners. The King paid no attention to the Lord Chancellor's suggestions,⁹ but

⁷ For Somers's letter to the King, see Trevor, vol. ii. p. 352.

⁸ "So far as concerns England, it would be a want of duty not to give your majesty this account, that there is a deadness and want of spirit universally in the nation, so as not at all to be disposed to the thoughts of entering into a new war; and that they seem to be tired with taxes to a degree beyond what was discerned." Somers to King William, dated August 28th, 1698. Rapin, vol. iii. p. 383.

⁹ "If King William was guilty of any fault in the negotiation, it was the relying too little on the sentiments of his English ministry, and managing the treaty too much through private channels. However, the necessity of keeping the secret, and the fluctuating state of parties at that time, will furnish some apology for his conduct in that particular." Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 334.

hastily completed the treaty which afterwards proved so unpopular to the country. The question of the Spanish succession was re-opened by the unexpected death of the Electoral Prince in January, 1699. A second Partition Treaty¹⁰ was, with equal secrecy and irresponsibility, negotiated and ratified by the King and Lord Somers, whereby the bulk of the Spanish dominions was to be given to the Archduke Charles. These arrangements may have been prudent, but they were unpopular among the Tories, who disliked England's meddling on the Continent. When all became known a storm of indignation burst from their party. In the next session of Parliament which met in November, 1699,¹¹ great complaints were made in the Lower House against the Lord Chancellor.² Their anger reached its height when in November³ the King of Spain died, and Louis, in defiance of all his treaties, accepted his grandson's⁴ great inheritance.⁵ Vigorous attacks were made on Lord Somers. The first charge brought against him was that of being guilty of piracy on the high seas by assisting Captain Kidd.⁶ In 1696 the colonists of America had been greatly annoyed by the attacks of certain pirates, who swarmed the seas. It seemed very urgent to send an English ship of war to cruise against them, but there was no money to bear the expense, "for Parliament had so appropriated the money given for the sea that no part of it could be applied to this expedition."⁷ It was finally done by private subscription to which Somers contributed £1,000,⁸ thinking "it became the post he was in to concur in such a public service."⁹ Unfortunately it turned out that Captain Kidd,

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 191. Also Green, vol. iv. p. 68.

¹¹ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 252. ² *Ibid.* pp. 254, 257-259

³ November 1st, 1700.

⁴ Philip, Duke of Anjou, second son of the Dauphin.

⁵ Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 109.

⁶ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 246. Goldwin Smith, vol. ii. p. 122.

⁷ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 433.

⁸ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 248.

⁹ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 434.

who was sent with orders to "sink, burn and destroy" any pirates, finding himself in the command of a well-appointed vessel, thought it would be more profitable to turn pirate himself. He did so and after a few years ended his career by execution for murder and piracy.¹⁰

The charge against Somers for having assisted this pirate¹ was so outrageous that it was rejected by a large majority. He was attacked a second time in connection with the estates of Ireland.² Unfortunately he was ill and unable to be present at the debate, which his enemies immediately put down to a want of courage.³ The Commons, ill-content with their success, now sent a humble address to the King begging "that His Majesty will remove John, Lord Somers, Lord Chancellor of England, from his presence and councils for ever."⁴ (April, 1700.) The debate on this is lost, but the result was a defeat of the motion by a majority of 167 to 106.⁴

The next day Parliament was prorogued; but the Tories were none the less eager for the dismissal of the Lord Chancellor.⁵ First they tried to induce him to join their party in a new ministry, but Somers rejected their overtures by the simple answer, "This is neither my custom nor consistent with my honour."⁶

William was well aware of his own unpopularity, and also of that of his favourite minister.⁷ He began to think

¹⁰ Howell, vol. xiv. p. 123 *et seq.*

¹ Ranke, vol. v. p. 203.

² A Bill was introduced to resume the grants of forfeited Irish estates, which William had very lavishly distributed among his favourites. Being once thrown out by the Lords, it was tacked to a Bill of Supply. The Court still stoutly resisted, but it passed both Houses. See Burnet, vol. iv. p. 436 *et seq.*

³ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 439.

⁴ Campbell, p. 148. Also Tindal, Continuation of Rapin, 4to ed. vol. i. p. 401. ⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Mackintosh, *History of England*. Harley was particularly eager for his dismissal. "The just reputation and high rank which he had justly acquired were intolerable to Harley's envious heart." Birch's MSS. 4,223, Brit. Mus.

⁶ Cunningham, vol. i. 183.

⁷ Stanhope, *Queen Anne*, vol. i. chap. i. (Tauchnitz ed.).

that he must give in to the nation's wish to see Somers removed from the Chancellorship. Wearyed with the incessant broils of faction he determined to try what an accommodation with the Tories would do,⁸ and consented to remove Lord Somers from office. Summoning him to his presence he told him that "it seemed necessary for his service that he should part with the seals, and he wished that he would make the delivering them up his own act."⁹ Somers declined to do this, thinking it would imply fear and consciousness of guilt.¹⁰ He told the King, however, that whenever His Majesty should send a warrant under his hand, commanding him to deliver them up, he would promptly obey it. Accordingly, on April 17, an order was brought to him by the Earl of Jersey and the seal was sent by him to the King.¹ In this manner Lord Somers was removed from that post² the duties of which he had for seven years discharged with integrity and ability, though, perhaps, not altogether as judicially as he might have done.

⁸ Stanhope, *Queen Anne*, vol. i. chap i. (Tauchnitz ed.).

⁹ Trevor, vol. ii. p. 389. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 444.

¹⁰ "The Whigs successively withdrew their situations : Orford retired in disgust in 1699, and Montagu quitted the Treasury in November, with the promise of being called to the peerage. Somers was indignant at the timidity of his colleagues and persisted in retaining the seats till he received his formal dismissal in May, 1700." Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 105; also Belsham, *History of Great Britain*, vol. ii. p. 49.

¹ Evelyn writes in his diary, April 24th, 1700: "The scale was taken from the Lord Chancellor Somers, though he had been acquitted by a great majority of votes for what was charged against him in the House of Commons. This being in term time put some stop to business, many eminent lawyers refusing to accept the office, considering the uncertainty of things in this fluctuating conjuncture. It is certain that this Chancellor was a most excellent lawyer, very learned in all polite literature, a superior pen, master of a handsome style, and of easy conversation, but he is said to make too much haste to be rich, as his predecessor, and most in place in this age did, to a most prodigious excesso that was ever known."

² Thus the Lord Somers was discharged from this great office which he had held for seven years, with a high reputation for capacity, integrity and diligence : he was in all respects the greatest man I had ever known in that post." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 446. For Somers's dismissal see also Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 37 *et seq.* and Tindal, *Continuation of Rapin*, 4to ed. vol. i. p. 403 *et seq.*

Somers's friends retired with him, and a new administration composed of moderate Tories, with Lords Rochester³ and Godolphin as its leading members, took their place.

The Whigs were highly indignant at the behaviour of the King. But Somers was too great a man to cherish ill-feeling towards his Sovereign. When he had recovered his health at Tunbridge Wells he retired to his villa, and once more turned his mind to literary pursuits. He was not sorry to bid farewell for awhile to the unrestful life of a politician.

In November, 1698, he had been elected President of the Royal Society,⁴ and he occupied the chair till 1704 when he retired to give place to Newton. During his retirement from public life his duties as President of this Society were peculiarly grateful to him. An ardent lover of literature and science he had as a Fellow long been in the habit of frequenting the meetings. As President he regularly attended, doing all in his power to further the reputation and usefulness of the Society.

But Somers was not beyond reach of attack. The Tories were not satisfied with his dismissal; they still remembered his part in the unpopular and disastrous Partition Treaties. In 1701 a proposal was made in the Commons "to impeach Lord Somers, late Chancellor of England, for the share he had had in these treaties, and for other high crimes and misdemeanours."⁵ While the debate touching his impeach-

³ Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester, was the younger brother of Anne Hyde, wife of James II. He had been made Lord Treasurer by James II. (1681). In 1687 he was deprived of his office because he refused to become Roman Catholic.

⁴ Weld, *History of the Royal Society*, vol. i. p. 338. Evelyn writes, December 7th, 1698: "Being one of the Council of the Royal Society I was named to be one of the Committee to wait on our new President, the Lord Chancellor." Also, November 30th, 1700: "At the Royal Society Somers, the late Chancellor, was continued President."

⁵ This proceeding caused great excitement. Prior, still a Whig, wrote to the Duke of Manchester: "I must congratulate your happiness that you are out of this noise and tumult, where we are tearing and destroying every man his neighbour. To-morrow is the great day when we expect my Lord Chancellor will be fallen upon, though God knows what crime he is guilty of but that of being a very great man and a wise and upright judge."

ment was proceeding in the Commons, Somers, with his usual fearlessness, sent a message down to the House in which "having heard that the House was in a debate concerning him he desired that he might be admitted and heard in his own defence." This was granted and a chair was set for him a little within the Bar. He addressed the House in his usual calm and dignified manner.⁶ He admitted⁷ "that the King had asked the advice of his confidential servants upon this occasion; and that His Majesty had even informed him, that if he and his other ministers thought that a treaty ought not to be made upon such a project, that the whole matter must be let fall, for he could not bring the French to better terms." He further told the House "that when he received the King's letter from Holland, with an order to send over the necessary powers, he conceived that he should be assuming too much upon himself if he caused any delay in the progress of so important a treaty, considering the precarious state of the health of the King of Spain; for if the Spanish King died before the treaty was completed, he would not have been justified in delaying the transmission of the powers, as the King's letter amounted in fact to a warrant . . . that at all events he did not think it became him to endanger the public interest by insisting on a point of form, at a very critical time, and when the greatest despatch was requisite: that, nevertheless, he had written his own opinion very fully to His Majesty, objecting to several particulars in the treaty, and proposing other articles which he thought were for the interest of England; that he thought himself bound, by the duty of his office, to put the Great Seal to the treaty when it was concluded; and that in the whole course of the

⁶ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 507.

⁷ For proceedings of impeachment in full see Howell, vol. xiv. p. 233 *et seq.* For impeachment of Somers see *Memoirs of Bolingbroke*, p. 76; Coxo, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 113; Luttrell, *State Affairs*, vol. v. p. 39 *et seq.*; Burnet, vol. iv. p. 475 *et seq.*; Tindal, *Continuation of Rapin*, 4to ed. vol. i. p. 458 *et seq.*

transaction, he had offered his best advice to his Sovereign as a Privy Councillor, and as Chancellor had executed his office according to his conception of his duty."⁸ After having thus spoken, he withdrew. His defence, delivered in his simple and earnest manner, is said to have made so deep an impression that if the question had immediately been put, the prosecution would have been withdrawn.⁹ Sir Robert Walpole, then a very young member, took Somers's part warmly and opposed the motion, but with his usual tact he did not speak, fearing to weaken the ex-Chancellor's arguments by a discussion.¹⁰ But Somers had other friends who were less considerate, and the debate was carried on till midnight.¹ When the House divided a majority of ten out of nearly 400² present, voted that "John, Lord Somers, by advising His Majesty in the year 1698 to the Treaty of Partition of the Spanish monarchy, whereby large territories of the King of Spain's dominions were to be delivered up to France, was guilty of a high crime and misdemeanour."³

Notwithstanding this vote, the zeal of the Commons seemed to have cooled down. They passed a resolution of censure, in the form of an address to the King "to remove the Lords Somers, Orford, Portland, Halifax, from his presence and councils for ever;"⁴ but after that they seemed indifferent as to the progress of the impeachment. Violent and continuous disputes went on between the two Houses, until finally the Lords named their own day for the trial, sending word to the Commons that they would proceed with the trial should the prosecutors appear or not.⁵ The Commons, either offended by the way in which they had

⁸ Burnet, vol. iv. pp. 490-491.

⁹ Coxe, *Life of Sir R. Walpole*, vol. i. p. 22. ¹⁰ *Ibid.* ¹ *Ibid.* p. 23.

² 198 to 188. Stanhope, *Queen Anne*, chap. i. Ranke, vol. v. p. 255.

³ Ralph, *History*, vol. ii. p. 943, or Burnet, vol. iv. p. 492, note. Also Somers's *Tracts*, vol. xi. p. 337.

⁴ Similar resolutions were passed against these lords as against Somers for their share in the Partition Treaty.

⁵ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 516.

been treated, or not displeased to have an excuse for letting the matter, which appeared not over popular, drop, decided not to attend on the day appointed.⁶ June 17, 1701, the day of the trial, came. The Lord High Steward's Court was convened with all due solemnity; the judges took their seats, the audience thronged the Hall and the accused answered to his name. No one appearing to prosecute,⁷ the Lords pronounced, by a majority of 56 to 31, "that John, Lord Somers, be acquitted⁸ of the articles of impeachment against him exhibited by the House of Commons and all things therein contained, and that the said impeachment be dismissed." Whatever may have been Somers's misconduct in the affair of the treaties, his impeachment was little more than an outbreak of party violence.⁹ The Tories, by their foolish and impetuous behaviour made themselves decidedly less popular. William came to see what a mistake he had made in changing his ministry at such a critical period. The promises of the Tories had come to nothing; they had neither made it easier for him to manage the unruly Commons nor had they tried to promote peace abroad and quiet government at home; they had simply pursued their own private interests.¹⁰ The whole of the summer of the year 1701 the King spent in Holland. In September he wrote home to the Earl of Sunderland¹ expressing a desire to change his ministry. "He is undeter-

⁶ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 516.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 517.

⁸ Stanhope, vol. i. p. 30. Also Luttrell, vol. v. p. 62. Evelyn writes, June 20th, 1701: "The Commons demanded a conference with the Lords on the trial of Lord Somers, which the Lords refused, and proceeding with the trial, the Commons would not attend and he was acquitted."

⁹ "I cannot help referring to my old opinion, which is now supported with more weight than I ever expected; and wonder that a man can be found in England who has bread, that will be concerned in public business. Had I a son I would sooner breed him a cobbler than a courtier, and a hangman than a statesman." Duke of Shrewsbury to Lord Somers, June 17th, 1701. Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 441.

¹⁰ The year when Rochester was at the head, William is reported to have said, was the most stormy. See Burnet, vol. iv. p. 518. Cooke, *Hist. of Party*, vol. i. p. 540.

¹ For letter see Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 443. It is dated Sept. 1st.

mined whether he shall call a new Parliament; the Tories giving him great hopes, and making him great promises." Sunderland's reply (dated September 11, 1701) gives a clear account of the state of England. "The ministry grows more hated every day and more exposed,"² so his advice to the King was to dismiss the Tories and once more rely on the Whigs.

"The Tories will not be satisfied without ruining my Lord Somers, nor the Whigs without undoing the ministers; in which the latter think they have the whole nation on their side. But at last what can the King do? He must certainly do what may determine him to take his measures. For example, let him come into England as soon as he can, and immediately send for my Lord Somers. He is the life, the soul and the spirit of his party, and can answer for it; not like the present ministers, who have no credit with theirs, any further than they can persuade the King to be undone. When His Majesty speaks to my Lord Somers, he ought to do it openly and freely; and ask him plainly, what he and his friends can do, and will do, and what they expect, and the methods they would propose. By this the King will come to make a judgment of his affairs, and he may be sure that my Lord Somers will desire nothing for himself or any of the impeached lords, but will take as much care not to perplex the King's business as can be desired; and if he can do nothing His Majesty shall like, he will remain still zealous and affectionate to his person and government."³

Further correspondence went on between William, Sunderland and Somers, with the object of undertaking a change of ministry in favour of the Whigs. William wrote to Lord Somers on October 10, 1701.⁴ "J'ai chargé Mr.

² "The Whigs, though hated in power, became the favourites of the nation when in disgrace; the Tories excited general disgust. Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 130.

³ Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 446.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 452.

Gallway de vous parler de ma part, avec beaucoup de franchise. J'espère que vous ajouterez une entière créance à ce qu'il vous dira ; et que vous voudrez bien en user avec la mesme franchise, sans aucune réserve, et estre persuadé de la continuation de mon amitié."

Lord Somers, after receiving this letter, drew up some "heads of argument"⁵ in favour of a return to a Whig administration and the immediate dissolution of the Parliament, which were later communicated to the King.

While these negotiations were proceeding, King James II. died at St. Germains, and immediately after his death his son was acknowledged by Louis as James III., King of England.⁶ No better news could have reached England. Once more his enemy had done for William what skill and diplomacy could not effect. The whole nation burst into a flame of patriotism. The King's return to England was a scene of general rejoicing. At Hampton Court most of the ministers were assembled to congratulate William on his safe return, and the chiefs of the Whig party, though not in power, were also there. It was noticeable that Somers and Halifax, who had so recently been attacked by the Commons, were received by the King with even more marks of attention than he was in the habit of usually showing to his courtiers. This alarmed the Tories, while it gave fresh hope to the Whigs.⁷ William seized the moment of excitement and dissolved Parliament.⁸ A general election followed. Four Whig members were returned for London. In the country the Whigs recovered part, at least, of the ground

⁵ Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 453.

⁶ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 294. Louis had acknowledged William as King of England in the peace of Ryswick and pledged himself to oppose all attacks on his throne, but in September, 1701, he entered the bedchamber at St. Germains where James II. was breathing his last and promised to acknowledge his son at his death as King of England, Scotland and Ireland. Green, vol. iv. p. 76.

⁷ "The Whigs, lately vanquished, were full of hope and ardour. The Tories, lately triumphant and secure, were exasperated and alarmed." Macaulay, vol. v. pp. 300, 301.

⁸ November 10. Green, vol. iv. p. 76.

which they had lost.⁹ Various changes were made in the ministry to the disadvantage of the Tories.¹⁰ Lord Somers did not become a member of the government,¹ though he was on the point of being restored to office.² But there is little doubt that he drew up William's last address³ to his Parliament, which Burnet⁴ called "the best speech that he, or perhaps any other prince ever made to his people." In words of fire and eloquence he bade them drop their factious disputes and know no other distinction but that of those who were for the Protestant religion and the present Establishment, and of those who meant a Popish Prince and a French Government.⁵

Before the final formation of the Whig ministry was completed, the death of William on March 8, 1702, put an end to the project. Just in the full excitement of victory, just when he pictured himself about to carry out the dream of his life by leading a victorious army to the invasion of France,⁶ a fall from his horse broke his collar bone, and, in his shattered state of health, proved fatal.⁷ His death meant farewell to the hopes of the Whigs. The sympathies

⁹ Wharton regained his ascendancy in Buckinghamshire. Macaulay, vol. v. p. 303.

¹⁰ Godolphin left the Treasury to make room for Lord Carlisle. Manchester was made Secretary instead of Hedges.

¹ "Lord Somers, by whose advice William had been principally guided, was sensible of the critical state of affairs, and not only declined to accept an office but induced the chief members of his party to withdraw their pretensions and give a disinterested support to government." Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 137.

² Ralph says the Seals were offered to him again. See *Lives of Eminent Persons*, tit. Somers, p. 15.

³ Hardwicke saw it in draft in Somers's handwriting at the fire at Lincoln's Inn in 1752. See also Stanhope, vol. i. p. 35, and Coxe, *ut supra*, vol. i. p. 137.

⁴ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 546.

⁵ "The issue Louis had raised was no longer a matter of European politics, but a question whether the work of the Revolution should be undone and whether Catholicism and despotism should be replaced on the throne of England by the arms of France." Green, vol. iv. p. 76.

⁶ The Tories were as much for war as the Whigs. Green, p. 77.

⁷ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 309.

of the new Sovereign were entirely with the Tories. Anne had been brought up from childhood to regard the Whigs as Republicans at heart and enemies of the Church. She had therefore always had a strong dislike for them and had looked upon them as her enemies, for, of all the passions of her nature, the strongest and deepest was her attachment to the English Church.⁸

It was soon obvious which party was to be the favourite with the Queen. Six days after William's death Marlborough was made a Knight of the Garter and Captain General of the forces.⁹ Godolphin, Marlborough's son-in-law, became Lord of the Treasury.¹⁰ The Earl of Nottingham¹ and Sir Charles Hedges² were made Secretaries of State in the place of the Duke of Manchester and Vernon. The Marquess of Normanby was appointed Lord Privy Seal and soon after created Duke of Buckingham.³ The Great Seal was put into commission.⁴ Somers, Halifax and Orford were omitted from the Privy Council.⁵ The triumph of the Tories was complete,⁶ though in the peculiar position of being bound to carry out the Whig policy—the policy of

⁸ Lecky, vol. i. p. 31. "The Queen had from her infancy imbibed the most unconquerable prejudices against the Whigs. She had been taught to look upon them all, not only as Republicans, who hated the very shadow of regal authority, but as implacable enemies to the Church of England." *Marlborough's Conduct*, p. 123.

⁹ Lecky, vol. i. p. 32.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Marlborough would, therefore, have supreme control of the finances.

¹ "Of all statesmen most dear to the High Church party." Lecky, vol. i. p. 32.

² "The Tories would trust none but the Earl of Nottingham, and he would serve with none but Sir Charles Hedges." Tindal, 4to ed. vol. i. p. 545.

³ Lecky, vol. i. p. 33.

⁴ The Great Seal, after it was taken from Lord Somers, was offered to Sir Thomas Trevor and Chief Justice Holt, both of whom refused. "For no one thought himself worthy to succeed Somers in his high office." Cunningham, *History*, vol. i. p. 183.

⁵ Lecky, vol. i. p. 33. Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 147.

⁶ "The Tories were double the number of Whigs in the House." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 45. On the accession of Anne they were content to follow in the wake of Marlborough and Godolphin." Stanhope, *Queen Anne*, vol. i. p. 92.

war with France—which Marlborough had the strongest personal motives for promoting.⁷ Of the Whigs, Somers seemed particularly disliked by the Queen.⁸ He had been the friend and adviser of her late brother-in-law, of whom she had no very pleasant recollections, and she suspected him of having been against her in her wish to be a member of the Council of Regency and to have a separate establishment as next heir to the throne.⁹ Being so little a favourite at the new Court, Lord Somers withdrew from public life, and spent much of his time at his seat in Hertfordshire in the study of history, antiquities and polite literature. He had, when he was made Lord Chancellor, become the patron of Addison, enabling him to complete his education abroad and procuring for him a pension of £300. Perhaps the slight which he felt most from the new Sovereign was the order that this sum should be discontinued.¹⁰ Somers, however, remained the poor poet's friend; he introduced him into the Whig Kit-Cat Club,¹¹ of which he himself was one of the original members, and visited him in his poor dwelling in the Haymarket.

Though banished from the Court, Somers did all in his power to support and further his principles of liberty. He attended the House of Lords regularly, his name being

⁷ W. F. Lord, *Political Parties in Reign of Queen Anne*, p. 76. Lecky, vol. i. p. 33.

⁸ His name was even struck out of the Commission of Peace in every county. Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 257. "This aversion to the whole party had been confirmed by the ill-usage she had met with from her sister and King William. Tories had served Anne in the affair of her settlement, so it was natural that Tories were in favour." *Marlborough's Conduct*, p. 123.

⁹ Campbell, p. 173. ¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 174.

¹¹ This club is said to have been founded by a bookseller, Jacob Tonson. It derived its name from meeting at the house of Christopher Cat, close by Temple Bar, famous for his mutton pies:—

"Immortal made as Kit-Cat by his pies,"
and
"Hence did th' assembly's title first arise,
And Kit-Cat wits sprung first from Kit-Cat pies."

Other accounts state that "Cat" was not the surname of the master, but was taken from the sign of his house, "The Cat and Fiddle."

rarely absent from the list of those present in their places.² He took a leading part in the debates on the Bill against Occasional Conformity³ which took place in the first Parliament of Queen Anne. By the introduction of this famous Bill the Tories were working for their own ruin. If they thought thereby to extinguish the influence of the Whigs they were doubly mistaken.* The Bill had precisely the opposite effect; it gave the Whigs⁴ a ground of contention, which otherwise it would have been difficult for them to create.⁵

The Test Acts prevented anyone from holding office under the Crown or from being a member of a Corporation who had not taken the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England. It had, therefore, come to be the practice that many who were really Dissenters qualified themselves for office by obeying the Act and then returning to their own places of worship. These, the Occasional Conformists, were highly obnoxious to the Tories and High Church party, who by this Bill hoped to exclude such people altogether.⁶ The Bill quickly passed the Commons by a considerable majority, but it met with sturdy opposition in the Lords.⁷ In 1702, when it was first introduced, it was supported by all the weight of the Crown and even Prince George, the Queen's Consort, a Lutheran and Occasional Conformist himself, was persuaded to vote for the Bill.⁸ In consequence of this opposition from the Whigs, various

² Campbell, p. 174, and note.

³ Burnet, vol. v. p. 49 *et seq.* See also Tindal, vol. i.

* Somerville, *Queen Anne*, p. 25.

* Burnet says the terms "High Churoh" and "Low Church" came into use at this time of division among the Church parties. See *Own Times*, vol. v. p. 70.

⁷ Lord, p. 76. ⁸ *Ibid.* p. 79.

⁹ Lecky, vol. i. p. 36. Lord, p. 79. See Cobbett, *Parliamentary History*, vol. vi. p. 61 *et seq.* Burnet writes: "The Court put their whole strength to carry the Bill."

"My heart is vid you," he is said to have whispered to Wharton in the lobby. Oldmixon, p. 219, quoted in Burnet, vol. v. p. 109, note.

alterations were made to which the Commons objected. A free conference was demanded, in which Lord Somers⁸ was one of the managers for the Lords. He strongly supported the amendments. In 1703, when it was brought forward again, the support of the Crown was only luke-warm,⁹ owing to the influence of Marlborough and his wife.¹⁰ Marlborough and Godolphin were beginning more and more to rely on the Whigs. They had seen how offensive the Bill was to that party, and they were reluctant to take any steps which were distasteful to it, for it had contributed most to the war, which it was their own ambition to conduct. Therefore, without separating themselves from their party, they did all they could to dissuade them from bringing the Bill in again, but failed. It was again defeated in the Lords. When brought up a third time in the following session¹ the Court was wholly opposed to the Bill. Some Tories had proposed to "tack" it to the Bill of Supply,² so that if the Lords threw it out they would have the responsibility of cutting off the supplies of the Government.³ This was a false move which only damaged the party.⁴ In the Lords, Marlborough and Godolphin voted against it. The Whigs obtained a majority and the Occasional Conformist Bill was dropped. But it had done its work for the Whigs.⁵ Changes in the ministry took place almost immediately. Finding himself thwarted by the extreme High Tories, who would not support him in his war policy, Marlborough obtained their dismissal. Harley took Nottingham's place. The Tory Lord Chamberlain, the Earl

⁸ *Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke*, p. 99.

⁹ Lecky, vol. i. p. 37. Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 153 *et seq.*

¹⁰ Lord, *ut supra*, p. 79. Also Stanhope, vol. i. p. 123.

¹ Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 359 *et seq.* ² *Ibid.*

³ Lecky, vol. i. p. 37. Lord, *ut supra*, p. 79.

⁴ "This attempt destroyed their reputation as respectors of the Constitution." Lord, p. 81.

⁵ Popularity of the Tories diminished. Cooke, vol. i. p. 552.

of Jersey, was succeeded by a Whig, the Earl of Kent, and St. John was admitted to the ministry for the first time.⁶

Marlborough grew more and more disgusted with his party,⁷ and sought to come to good terms with the Whigs. The war must be continued and without their support he could not manage it. Consequently the Junto gained an increase of power. The elections of 1705 went in many cases against the Tories, with the result of a large majority for the Whigs.⁸ Marlborough and Godolphin, seeing it was all so much in the Whigs' favour, were eager to make a further conciliation with them.⁹ The first object of the Junto, at that time, was to procure an office for Lord Sunderland, who was one of their staunchest members. The Duchess of Marlborough eagerly supported his promotion;¹⁰ Godolphin and Marlborough gave in and Sunderland was appointed Envoy to Vienna¹ on the occasion of Joseph's accession to the throne. Other changes in the ministry took place. The Duke of Newcastle became Lord Privy Seal instead of the Duke of Buckingham,² who had resigned. Walpole entered the Admiralty,³ his first office, and the Great Seal was taken

⁶ Lecky, vol. i. p. 38.

⁷ He was attacked by pamphleteers. The Queen raised him two steps in the peerage, but the Tory Commons refused a grant to accompany the duke-dom. Lord, *ut supra*, p. 81.

⁸ Stanhope, vol. i. pp. 199, 229.

⁹ "It was indeed to the Whigs that Marlborough and Godolphin were by slow degrees inclining. They had been in some negotiation more or less direct, through the winter, with the knot of five Whig peers, the Junto as it was commonly called, which governed the Whig party at that time." Stanhope, vol. i. p. 197. The ministry of Marlborough and Godolphin in 1705 lasted till 1710, and was one of the most glorious in English history. Lecky, vol. i. p. 39.

¹⁰ Sunderland had married her daughter.

¹ "Marlborough, when the elections of 1705, as he hoped, returned a majority in favour of the war, brought about a coalition between the moderate Tories, who still clung to him, and the Whig Junto, whose support was purchased by making a Whig, William Cowper, Lord Keeper, and by sending Lord Sunderland as envoy to Vienna." Green, vol. iv. p. 89.

² Formerly Marquis of Normanby.

³ "He was appointed one of the Council to the Lord High Admiral, at the special recommendation of Marlborough." Stanhope, vol. i. p. 198.

from Nathan Wright⁴ and given into the charge of the able Whig, Lord Cowper.⁵

During these unquiet years Somers, though out of office, had been supporting the Government and doing his best to bring his party back to power. He cordially favoured the appointment of Cowper, although a man so much his junior. In 1705 he was once more restored to the post of Commissioner of the Peace, and sworn of the Privy Council.⁶ Though not a member of the Cabinet, he was, nevertheless, consulted on all questions of administration.⁷ In the preceding year he had been largely responsible for the project of appropriating the revenue of first fruits and tenths⁸ to the increase of the incomes of the poorer clergy. Bishop Burnet had long endeavoured to increase their incomes in this way, and the following letter,⁹ from Lord Somers, proves him to have been an enthusiastic and disinterested supporter of the scheme:—

November 22, 1701.

MY LORD,—I acknowledge the honour of your lordship's letter of the 17th with much thankfulness; I wish it may lie in my power to contribute to the excellent design you propose; no man will enter into it more willingly, nor shall labour in it more heartily. The point of the first-fruits and tenths is what I have proposed several times, with much earnestness but without success. When I have the happiness of seeing your lordship, we shall, I hope, discourse at large upon the whole subject. In the meantime allow me to assure you that I am, with great and sincere respect, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient humble servant,—SOMERS.

⁴ Who had been Lord Keeper in the Tory Cabinet of 1701. An incompetent lawyer. “The proved incompetency of Sir Nathan and the rising genius of Cowper made this a welcome change, independently of its party motive.” Stanhope, vol. i. p. 229. Also Lecky, vol. i. p. 38.

⁵ Cowper, William, first earl, a brilliant man. Lecky, vol. i. p. 38. “In their negotiations with the Junto Marlborough and Godolphin had been drawn into a promise to take an opportunity of dismissing Nathan Wright from the office of Lord Keeper and transferring the Great Seal to William Cowper, who was endeared to the Whig chiefs by eminent qualities no less than by party ties.” Stanhope, vol. i. p. 198.

“In 1704 Somers had written to Shrewsbury: ‘I find that in any reign, and with any success, there will be little cause to envy any one who has a share of the ministry of England.’ Quoted in Mahon, vol. i. p. 52.

⁷ Campbell, *ut supra*, p. 186.

⁸ Afterwards adopted under the name of “Queen Anne’s Bounty.”

⁹ Burnet, vol. vi. p. 318. Tindal, vol. i. p. 642.

All the changes in the elections of 1705 in favour of the Whigs caused the Queen the deepest grief.¹⁰ Instead, however, of trying to reconcile her, the Tories brought forward the motion for an address to the Queen¹¹ begging her to invite the Princess Sophia, the presumptive heir to the throne, to reside in England. Of all things this was the most distasteful to Anne, who hated the idea of having a rival Court in her country. The Whigs, among them Lord Somers, saw the difficulties this would entail, and he and his colleagues saved the Queen¹ and themselves from these dangers. Somers induced her to consent to the Regency Bill, by which a Commission of Lord Justices² should be empowered, on the Queen's death, to assume the administration of government in the name of the absent successor. It was passed.³ The Electorate party were fully reconciled by another Bill which naturalized the Princess Sophia and her issue. Somers wrote to the Elector, afterwards George I., to tell him what had taken place and to assure him of his zeal in securing the Protestant succession. The reply from his Electoral Highness shows the esteem he had for Somers, and gives much encouragement to the hopes of the Whigs for the new reign:—

¹⁰ Her ideal was a government in which neither Whigs nor Tories possessed a complete ascendancy, but above all things she dreaded and hated a supremacy of the Whigs. She had the strongest conviction that they were the enemies of her prerogative and still more the enemies of the Church. Lecky, vol. i. p. 43.

¹¹ Lecky, vol. i. p. 38.

¹ The Queen was present at the debate, but only to hear herself insulted. "The Duke of Buckingham urged it as an argument for inviting the Princess Sophia, who was now in the 76th year of her age, that the Queen might live till she did not know what she did, and be like a child in the hands of others." *Marlborough's Conduct*, p. 159.

² The Lord Justices were to be: Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Chancellor, Lord Keeper, Lord Treasurer, Lord President, Lord Privy Seal, Lord High Admiral and the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench. Lecky, vol. i. p. 39.

³ For debate concerning Regency Bill see Cobbett, *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 469 *et seq.*

June 20, 1706.

MY LORD,—The Lord Halifax delivered to me the letter which you was at the trouble of writing to me. I am much obliged to you for the light it gives concerning the affairs of England, but especially for the part which you have had in all that has been done there in favour of my family. The testimony of my Lord Halifax was not necessary to inform me of this. He could give you no other in this respect, but that which is due to you by all good Englishmen who love their religion and their country. I am not ignorant of what influence you may have amongst them, nor of the manner in which you have employed it. Nothing can give me a better opinion of the English nation than the justice they do your merit. My sentiments concerning the invitation of the successor are entirely conformed to yours, and I put all the value I ought upon the acts which the Lord Halifax brought us. He has convinced us of their importance, and hath discharged his commission as a man equally zealous for the prosperity of England, and for the interests of my family. I shall always look for opportunities of showing you how much I am, etc.*

Thus once more the Tory tactics had proved a total failure. Instead of embroiling their rivals with the Queen or the Electress, they had offended Anne by the disrespectful way in which some of the Tory lords had spoken of her. From this time, according to the Duchess of Marlborough, she began to express a wish to become reconciled with the Whig leaders.⁴ Having failed so completely in this, the Tories fell back on their last resource: the cry of "the Church in danger" was raised. A debate followed,⁵ Her Majesty being present, which Lord Rochester opened and Lord Somers closed. But this also went against the Tories.⁶ It was resolved that "under the happy reign of Her Majesty the Church was in a most safe and flourishing condition."⁷ The Queen published a Proclamation declaring that with the advice of her Privy Council she would "proceed with the utmost severity the law would allow of against the authors and spreaders of the said seditious and scandalous reports."⁸

* Campbell, p. 191.

⁴ *Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough*, vol. ii. p. 56.

⁵ For debate see Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 479 *et seq.*

⁶ 61 to 30 votes. Stanhope, vol. i. p. 234.

⁷ For debate see Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 479 *et seq.*

⁸ Lecky, vol. i. p. 39. *Parl. History*, p. 510.

Although in a weak state of health,⁹ Somers gave all his thought and energy to the great work of the Union of Scotland.¹⁰

William had recommended his Parliament to proceed with the measure; his successor, in her first speech, had strongly urged her Parliament to give their minds to it, and accordingly Commissioners had been appointed to conduct the treaty.¹ In March, 1705, an Act had been passed with the title, "An Act for the effectual securing of the Kingdom of England from the apparent dangers that may arise from several Acts lately passed in the Parliament of Scotland."² By one of the provisions of this Act the Queen was authorized to appoint Commissioners for England to treat with those of Scotland. She accordingly appointed those whom she thought suitable to manage the affair. Somers³ was among the selected; and, in fact, he became the leading spirit in the negotiation.⁴ Its success was largely due to his sagacity.⁵ When the question of the abolition of the Scottish Privy Council came to be discussed, Somers opposed the existence of a separate administration. It is interesting to look at his arguments in favour of a total union, which are preserved in the Hardwicke collection of papers.⁶ His

⁹ In the year 1706.

¹⁰ Burnet says he had the chief hand in projecting the scheme. This cannot be wholly the case, for it had already been many times proposed since the Stuarts came to the throne. It was largely owing to him, though, that it was successfully carried through. See Burnet, vol. v. p. 281.

¹ Stanhope, vol. i. p. 238.

² 3 and 4 Anne, cap. vii.

³ *Biog. Brit.* tit. Somers, p. 3752. For full list of Commissioners see Cobbett, vol. vi. pp. 534, 535. For debate in Lords concerning Union see *ibid.* p. 561 *et seq.*

⁴ "His clear and pervading genius proved to be the master spirit of the whole." Stanhope, vol. i. p. 238.

⁵ "The need of a union became apparent to every statesman, but it was only after three years' delay that the wisdom and resolution of Lord Somers brought the question to an issue." Green, vol. iv. p. 91.

⁶ "True concern for preserving the public peace—Heartily desirous of the Union—No less desirous to make it entire and complete—Not at all perfect while two political administrations subsist . . .—Worse State after the Union, if a distinct administration continue. . . .—I wish North Britain as happy as England; I meant it should be so in the Union, and I will

one desire was to make it entire and complete,⁷ and so enthusiastic was he⁸ that he corresponded with the ministers and leaders of party in Scotland, which largely helped to reconcile them to the change.⁹ The Act of Union, as it was completed in 1706, though not finally passed till the following year, provided that the two kingdoms should be united into one under the name of Great Britain and that the succession to the Crown of this United Kingdom should be ruled by the provisions of the English Act of Settlement. The Scotch law and the Scotch Church were left unaltered, but all rights of trade were opened to both countries, a common system of taxation was adopted and a uniform system of coinage. This lasting benefit to the two kingdoms will always reflect credit on the name of Somers. Till the end of 1708 Lord Somers remained in the same position, without office, but consulted on all occasions by the ministers, and putting all his energies into any measure that he thought was for the good of his country. At the same time he was seeking to restore the power of his party, and he watched with eminent satisfaction the success of the Whig policy.

Marlborough and Godolphin were now almost entirely with the Junto, and were eagerly working for more influence and power. The only hindrance in the Cabinet was Harley. They determined to remove him; if he were gone the strength of the Tories would be broken. They tried to

always do what lies in my little power that it shall be really so.—Not capable of judging of the circumstances or dispositions of Scotland; but I should think the true way to make the Union well relished, is to let the country see plainly, that England means no otherwise than fairly by them, and desires they should be in the same circumstances they are themselves, etc.” Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 473.

⁷ The Bill for rendering the Union more complete, by subjecting the affairs of both nations to one Privy Council, was carried in the Lords by a majority of 5 votes. Somerville, 4to, p. 298.

³ "Lord Somers exerted himself with uncommon ardour and diligence in promoting a measure so essential to the liberty of Scotland." *Ibid.*

⁹ Letters to Lord Leven, then Commander-in-Chief in Scotland, given in Campbell, p. 192 *et seq.*

persuade Anne to dismiss him.¹⁰ She remained firm; Harley was a zealous High Churchman, whom she trusted¹ and esteemed, and she would not part with him. Godolphin and Marlborough, therefore, threatened to resign.² Godolphin the Queen would have allowed to resign but she could not possibly dispense with Marlborough.³ There was no choice left her, so Harley was dismissed.⁴ At the same time retired his friends, who had come in with him, St. John, Secretary at War, Sir Thomas Mansell, Comptroller of the Household, and Sir Simon Harcourt, Attorney-General.⁵ But the ambition of the Whigs was by no means satisfied with these dismissals.⁶ They pressed for the appointment of Somers to the Presidency of the Council. This much distressed the Queen, who in a letter to Marlborough "declared that it would be utter destruction to her to bring Lord Somers into her service and was what she would never consent to."

In the autumn of 1708⁸ the death of Prince George of Denmark changed the conditions. The Prince, for reasons unknown,⁹ seemed to have taken even a stronger dislike to

¹⁰ "Somers had resolved never to take office while Harley continued in the administration." Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. iv. p. 53. Also Stanhope, vol. ii. p. 50.

¹ The trial and sentence of guilt pronounced on Greg, Harley's confidential clerk, made Harley much distrusted by others. Greg had been employed by Harley as a spy in Scotland and elsewhere, and had been found conducting a treasonable correspondence with M. de Chamillart, the French Secretary of State. Somers was one of the committee to try him; he was found guilty and condemned to death. He would not accuse his chief, so died. Stanhope, vol. ii. pp. 54-56. For the circumstances in relation to Greg, see W. F. Lord, p. 100 *et seq.*

² Lord, p. 85.

³ *Ibid.* For fall of Harley, its cause and reason, see W. F. Lord, p. 100 *et seq.*

⁴ Swift, *Change in Queen's Ministry*, ed. 1883, vol. iii. p. 171 (on February 11th).

⁵ Somerville, p. 270. Also Cunningham, vol. ii. p. 133.

⁶ "The Whig lords were determined to force themselves into power." Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. iv. p. 317. Also Stanhope, vol. ii. p. 90.

⁸ October 28th, 1708.

⁹ This antipathy might possibly be traced to two causes (see Lecky, vol. i. p. 43):

¹ The Whigs, and Somers at the head of them, had continually been pointing to the maladministration of the Prince at the head of the Admiralty, and had incessantly urged putting Orford in his place.

Somers than the Queen.¹⁰ As a result of their combined prejudice Somers had been strenuously kept out of office.¹¹ Although totally incompetent, Prince George had been Lord High Admiral. At his death the Earl of Pembroke succeeded him, thereby vacating the office of Lord President of the Council, which was given to Somers,² although the Queen was still very much against having him in the administration. The triumph of the Whigs now seemed complete.³ All the highest offices of the Crown were filled

2. In 1703 a bill was brought forward to enable the Queen to settle a revenue upon the Prince, in case he should survive her, and it was also proposed to add a clause exempting him from the condition (in the Act of Succession) that no foreigners might sit in Parliament, the Privy Council, or hold any high offices of the Crown. It was carried, but Somers, who had taken an active part in the debate, with several other Whigs signed a protest against the decision of the House. See *Lords' Journals*, Jan. 19th, 1702-1703.

¹⁰ Coxe, *ut supra*, vol. iv. p. 314.

¹¹ Vanburgh writes to the Earl of Manchester, July 27th, 1708 : "Things are in an odd way at Court ; not all the interests of Lord Treasurer (?) and Lady Marlborough, backed and pressed warmly by every man of the Cabinet, can prevail with the Queen to admit my lord Somers into anything, not so much as to make him Attorney General. She answered little to them, but stands firm against all they say." Manchester, *Court and Society from Elizabeth to Anne*, vol. ii. p. 376.

² Burnet writes on the appointment of Lord Somers (*Own Times*, vol. v. p. 393) : "The great capacity and inflexible integrity of this lord, would have made his promotion to this post very acceptable to the Whigs at any juncture, but it was most particularly so at this time ; for it was expected, that propositions for a general peace would be quickly made ; and so they reckoned that the management of that, upon which not only the safety of the nation, but of all Europe depended, was in sure hands when he was set at the head of the Councils, upon whom neither ill practices nor false colours were like to make any impression."

Somers writes to the Duke of Marlborough, Nov. 30th, 1709 : "I do not pretend to acquaint your Grace with the honour the Queen has been pleased to do me, in admitting me into her service, but rather to return my humble thanks to you on that account, since I am well assured, without your Grace's concurrence, nothing of that nature had been done. I hope your Grace will believe, that according to my poor capacity, I will serve Her Majesty diligently and faithfully and that I shall always be with the utmost truth and respect, etc. Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. iv. p. 320. See also Luttrell, *State Affairs*, vol. vi. p. 373.

1708. Somers kissed the Queen's hand as President of the Council. Nov. 27. Somers took his place as President. Also Swift, edition by Sir Walter Scott, vol. iii. p. 182.

³ Orford had taken Pembroke's place at the Admiralty after his resignation. Lecky, vol. i. p. 42. "The Whig Ministry, one of the most glorious in our annals." Cooke, vol. i. p. 564.

by members of the Junto. The Queen, although she never really overcame her dislike for Lord Somers, was content to retain him in her councils, although she came into frequent contact with him; on all which occasions he behaved with his usual polished and deferential manners. She continued, however, to have secret meetings with her favourite Harley,⁴ who, according to the Duchess of Marlborough, advised her to treat Somers as if he were her favourite minister. She writes:⁵ "I remember to have been at several of Lord Somers's conversations with Queen Anne to fill out their tea⁶ and wash their cups. 'Tis certain that as soon as he got into his post, to obtain which I so often urged the Queen, he made his court to Abigail, and very seldom came to me; and it is true that Lord Oxford and St. John used to laugh in their cups (which came out by Duke Devonshire), that they had instructed the Queen to behave so as to make Lord Somers think he should be her chief minister. She could act a part very well when her lesson was given her, and in a little time it appeared very plain to the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Godolphin, that Somers thought of nothing so much as to flatter the Queen and went to her personally in private."

Somers had made himself odious to the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough by advising⁷ Lord Chancellor Cowper to refuse to put the Great Seal to the Commission appointing the Duke Commauder-in-Chief for life,⁸ which

¹ Campbell, p. 203.

² Correspondence of Duchess.

³ Pope, in the *Rape of the Lock*, says: —

"Where thou, great Anne, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counse� take, and sometimes tea."

⁴ Even Somers thought Marlborough had power enough. "Lord Somers, who had no mind to be his Grace's subject, acquainted the Queen with it (viz., Marlborough's scheme to have it proposed in the Commons) and the danger she ran, if it succeeded. Which put an effectual stop, and gave the Queen a grateful sense of Lord Somers's fidelity and integrity ever after." Note by Dartmouth, Burnet, ed. 1833, vol. i. p. 416, note o.

⁵ "It is possible and by no means improbable that his motive was mainly to secure himself from disgrace and to disentangle himself from party politics." Lecky, vol. i. p. 49.

act of the Duke's had seriously alarmed the Queen.⁹ In spite of the foolish and tactless behaviour of the Tories, Anne was indignant at the Whigs grasping the whole power of the State.¹⁰ But their monopoly of power¹ was to be only a short one; almost exactly at the time when they had filled the Cabinet with their leaders, the causes which led to their ruin began to work. The alienation of the Duchess from the Queen was almost complete.

The war was wholly unpopular and hateful to the country; but the Whigs were forced to continue it for purely party reasons.² This gave the Tories a cry which was welcome to the nation, the cry for peace.³

The love of power took a stronger hold on the Whig leaders; their actions came more and more to be directed merely to their own personal interests; the interests of the State took a second place.

Their unpopularity reached its height in 1710 with the trial of Sacheverell, on which occasion they showed themselves overbearing and indiscreet.

A certain Dr. Sacheverell,⁴ a strong upholder of the doctrine of non-resistance, preached in London two sermons,⁵ in which he attacked the Revolution, maintaining

⁹ "It contributed much to the unpopularity of the Whigs." Lecky, vol. i. p. 50. Also Lord, *ut supra*, p. 86.

¹⁰ Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. v. p. 103.

¹ Marlborough and Godolphin were principally directed by Somers. *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 371.

² Lord, p. 87.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ "He was an eloquent preacher, and his fame as a pulpit orator drew him to the metropolitan flock of St. Saviour's in Southwark. He left no testimony to his capacity as an author save sermons printed after delivery and casual pamphlets. These are far above the level of the contemporary literature of that class, both in their good English composition and their good taste." His career later in life showed him in a very different light. "But in fact his career was none of his own making; it was a creation of imperious political forces. . . . A certain personal quality, not of an exalted kind, made him master of the situation when he found himself in it. That quality was vanity. In him this passion was absorbing and supreme," etc. For further characteristics of Sacheverell see Burton, *Reign of Queen Anne*, vol. ii. p. 179 *et seq.* For full account of the impeachment see Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 805 *et seq.*

⁵ The famous "Gunpowder Treason Sermons," because the second was preached on November 5th, 1709 (see Burton, vol. ii. p. 180). The first was preached at the Assizes of Derby, the second in London. For the sermons see Burton, vol. ii. p. 193 *et seq.*; and in full, *State Trials*, vol. xv. pp. 71-94.

that resistance to the King was never justifiable, and declaring that the Church was in danger "even in Her Majesty's reign." The Whigs were naturally angry at this semi-official production of doctrines subversive to the principles of the Revolution.⁶ The matter was brought before the Cabinet, when its wisest members,⁷ such as Somers, were in favour of letting the sermon alone. Others, however, and most strongly of all, Godolphin, who was indignant at being nicknamed "Volpone"⁸ or the "Fox," urged impeachment¹ before the House of Lords.² Somers and Marlborough, only too well aware of the unstable condition of the Whig party, were strongly opposed³ to an impeachment, but their arguments were in vain. A storm of passion burst on the Whigs. The trial became a pure party struggle.⁴ It lasted three weeks. Lord Somers attended daily, but he does not appear to have taken much active part until the Lords came to consider the verdict. When it was debated whether or no a question should be put on each of the four articles of the impeachment, Somers strongly supported the proposal, which was adopted, that there should

⁶ The dedication to it pointed to the Dissenters as sinners and to the Whigs who gave the Dissenters countenance and support as the communicators and propagators of sin. *Ibid.* p. 198.

⁷ "Somers and Eyre, the Solicitor-General, from the beginning opposed the impeachment, and there is reason to believe that both Marlborough and Walpole joined in the same views." Lecky, vol. i. p. 53.

⁸ "Volpone" was a character in the *Fox* of Ben Jonson.

' Swift says: "About this time happened the famous trial of Dr. Sacheverel, which arose from a foolish passionate pique of the Earl of Godolphin, whom this divine was supposed, in a sermon, to have reflected on under the name of Volpone, as my Lord Somers, a few months after, confessed to me; and at the same time, that he had earnestly, and in vain, endeavoured to dissuade the earl from that attempt." *Change in Queen's Ministry*, ed. 1883, vol. iii. pp. 173, 174.

² Burton, vol. ii. p. 199.

³ "Somers and Marlborough strongly counselled a prosecution before the ordinary tribunals, to avoid making the culprit a martyr." Alison, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. ii. p. 75. Also Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. v. p. 123.

¹ Sacheverell himself said: "It has been owned by some of the managers for the honourable House of Commons, that though I am the person impeached, yet my condemnation is not the thing principally aimed at. I am, it seems, an insignificant tool of a party, not worth regarding," etc. He was pretty near the truth. Burton, vol. ii. p. 213.

be but one question: "Is Henry Sacheverell, Doctor of Divinity, guilty of high crimes and misdemeanours, charged on him by impeachment of the House of Commons?"⁵ Though Somers gave his vote against Sacheverell, Swift declares that he heard him profess that his opinion was against this foolish and violent prosecution, and that he foresaw it would end in the ruin of his party.⁶ Dr. Sacheverell was declared "guilty," and as Somers predicted, with the declaration of the verdict the Lord Chancellor was pronouncing the doom of the Whigs.⁷ Though found guilty, the slight sentence⁸ of three years' suspension was regarded as a virtual acquittal and celebrated as a party triumph. Sacheverell became the hero of the nation. The Queen⁹ was utterly disgusted with the violence of the Whigs and only waited for a favourable opportunity to dissolve Parliament and free herself from the party which had always been so obnoxious to her.¹ Marlborough still looked to the Whigs for support, but they, knowing that his union with them had simply been forced on him by the war, did nothing in his defence. The Queen broke with the Duchess altogether² and transferred her friendship to Mrs. Masham,³ a

⁵ "Impeachment of Sacheverell which shattered the Whig Ministry." Lecky, vol. i. p. 51.

⁶ Swift, *History of the Four Last Years of the Queen*, works ed. 1883, vol. v. p. 25.

⁷ "It was, perhaps, the most potent of several causes to drive their party from office." Burton, vol. ii. p. 290. "The Whigs took it into their heads to roast a parson, and they did roast him; but their zeal tempted them to make the fire so high that they scorched themselves." *Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke*, p. 142.

⁸ Burton, vol. ii. p. 257.

⁹ She had been present at the trial.

¹ "The Queen's intentions to make a change in her ministry now began to break out." Burnet, vol. vi. p. 8.

² The story of their quarrel is a long one. That their strong friendship broke was no doubt partly owing to the Duchess's imperious temper. She carried everything with a high hand, and as time went on presumed upon the Queen's friendship for her. The Duchess was neither a Tory nor a High Churchwoman, and sought to bring the Queen over to her views. For the quarrel see Burton, vol. iii. p. 51 *et seq.*; also *Marlborough's Conduct*; also Somerville, p. 259.

³ Abigail Hill, whom the Duchess of Marlborough herself introduced to Queen Anne as suitable to fill a vacancy in the bedchamber staff. They were low and worthless people. See Burton, vol. iii. p. 53.

cousin of Harley; Marlborough's two sons-in-law, Godolphin and Sunderland, were dismissed.⁴

The last and most fatal blow to the Whigs was the dismissal of Lord Somers. This bold act the Queen carried out at the end of September.⁵ She was in Council with the Lord Chancellor on her right hand and Lord Somers on her left. After some routine business was over she called upon Sir Simon Harcourt, the Attorney-General, to produce a Proclamation, which she had commanded him to prepare for dissolving Parliament. When it had been read, the Lord Chancellor rose to dissuade her from such a step.⁶ She, however, interrupted him, saying "that she had considered the matter well, that she would admit of no debate and that the writs for a new Parliament must immediately issue." She thereupon signed the Proclamation and declared her uncle, the Earl of Rochester, President of the Council instead of Lord Somers.⁷

Other Whigs were thrown out. Harley was made Lord Treasurer; Harcourt became Lord Chancellor and St. John Secretary of State. "So sudden and so entire a change of the ministry," says Burnet,⁸ "is scarce to be found in our history. . . . The Queen was much delighted with all these changes and seemed to think she was freed from the

⁴ August 8th. Lord Dartmouth succeeded Sunderland as Secretary of State. The Treasury was put into commission. Burnet, vol. vi. pp. 8, 10. For Godolphin's letter to the Queen, see Burton, vol. iii. p. 65.

⁵ Burnet says October, but the *London Gazette* and other documents showing the new appointments prove him to have been mistaken. In Cobbett's *Parliamentary History* it is September (see vol. vi. p. 909).

⁶ For account of this see *ibid.* Swift writes in his journal to Stella: "Sept. 20th. To-day I returned my visits to the duke's daughters; . . . then I heard the report confirmed of removals; my lord president Somers; the Duke of Devonshire, lord steward; and Mr. Boyle, Secretary of State, are all turned out to-day. I never remember such bold steps taken by a court," etc.

⁷ Burnet, vol. vi. p. 12. "The Queen dismissed Somers and made Rochester Lord President of the Council, assuring him that she had not lessened her esteem for him, and designed to continue the pension and should be glad if he came often to her" (*ibid.*). Luttrell, vol. vi. p. 632. Cooke, vol. i. p. 577.

⁸ Burnet, vol. vi. pp. 13, 14.

chains the old ministry had held her in; she spoke of it to several persons as a captivity she had been long under."

By this courageous and decisive step Anne had shown that she was no mere tool with which her ministers could play as they pleased. On the contrary, she had abundantly proved that if her ministers behaved to her in a way she disliked, and if they tried to monopolize all the power of the State, she would have nothing more to do with them.⁹

The Tories were exultant—the Whigs were prostrate. Somers retired from public life and continued one of the opposition till Queen Anne's death.

The last act of the Whigs while in office had been to reject the overtures which Louis XIV. made at Gertruydenberg.¹⁰ Somers, as eager as he always had been to prevent the union of France and Spain, did not take into account the reduced state of France and strongly supported Marlborough in his desire to break through the last line of the French defences on the side of Flanders and to march upon Paris. This continuance of the war was looked upon by the nation

⁹ The view of Anne's character taken by Mr. W. F. Lord (*vide* "Development of Political Parties during the Reign of Queen Anne") seems to be the fairest and most correct. To make a stand against the great men of the Junto,* to dismiss the violent Lord Sunderland and the great Lord Somers as she did, without either consulting or asking aid from anyone, surely shows much force and determination of character; and contradicts altogether the accepted opinion of Anne as being a mere puppet, entirely under the influence of the Duchess of Marlborough, entirely absorbed in court gossip and luxuries of toilet and table. The mere outline of her career ought to confute this unjust verdict. (See Lord, p. 103, note.) Ranke, perhaps, recognizes more than English historians the independence of the Queen's character when he says: "The Queen breaks the chain, which through Marlborough's union with the Junto, his authority over the Whigs and the predominance of the Whigs in Parliament, had hitherto surrounded the Queen and restrained her freedom. That she attempted to break it and succeeded in doing so gives her reign a very strongly marked character in English history." See Ranke, vol. v. p. 337.

¹⁰ The conferences at Gertruydenberg were opened on March 20th and lasted till July 13th. Somerville, p. 386. For what took place see *ibid.* pp. 386-390.

* Anne writes, September 12th, 1907, to Godolphin: "Whoever of the Whigs thinks I am to be hectored or frightened into a compliance, though I am a woman, is mightily mistaken in me. I thank God I have a soul above that, and am too much concerned for my reputation to do anything to forfeit it." Quoted by Stanhope, vol ii. p. 285.

as merely a device of Marlborough to enable him to keep the command of the army abroad.¹ Though Somers may have taken a larger view of the situation and acted for what he thought the general good of the country, the other members of his party had no doubt grown so to thirst for power as to be willing to sacrifice religion or the prosperity of the nation for the sake of their own individual advancement.

As soon as Lord Somers was removed from office, he was attacked on all sides by the Tory Press; and most mercilessly of all by Swift. Somers had made Swift's acquaintance in 1702,² at which time he was a zealous Whig. He expressed a great admiration for Somers and as a proof of this dedicated to him "The Tale of a Tub."³ When the Whigs returned to power he hoped for promotion in the Church, and wrote a "Discourse on the Contents and Dissensions between the Nobles and the Commons in Athens and Rome, with the consequences they had upon both those States," in which he flattered the impeached lords in the character of Athenians. Somers he represented as Aristides. "Their next great man was Aristides. Besides the mighty service he had done his country in the wars, he was a person

¹ See Hallam, *Constitutional History*, vol. iii. p. 212. "The obstinate adherence of Godolphin and Somers to the preliminaries may possibly have been erroneous; but it by no means deserves the reproach that has been unfairly bestowed on it; nor can the Whigs be justly charged with protracting the war to enrich Marlborough or to secure themselves in power." On the other hand, Lecky says: "There are few instances in modern history of a more scandalous abuse of the rights of conquest" (*History of the Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 47, cd. 1879). Cooke, in his *History of Party*, says Marlborough was responsible for this injudicious step (ed. 1836, vol. i. p. 574). See W. F. Lord, p. 106.

² *Memoirs of Swift*, works ed. 1883, vol. i. p. 72.

³ Mr. Cooksey, in his *Life of Lord Somers*, says that "The Tale of a Tub" was written by Somers and his friend Shrewsbury, when they spent many days together at White Ladies, and he says he has no doubt the characters were drawn from real life (p. 19). It is, however, usually attributed to Swift, and there are many allusions in other authors to contradict Cooksey's statement, as for instance: Sheridan, in his life of Swift, says that soon after the publication of "The Tale of a Tub," a Mr. Waryng, a chamber fellow of Swift's, declared he had read the first sketch of it in Swift's handwriting when he was only nineteen. See Sheridan, *Life of Swift*, p. 6. Space does not allow following this out further.

of the strictest justice, and best acquainted with the laws as well as forms of their government, so that he was in a manner Chancellor of Athens. This man, upon a slight and false accusation of favouring arbitrary power was banished by ostracism; which, rendered into modern English, would signify that they voted he should be removed from their presence and council for ever. But, however, they had the wit to recall him, and to that action owed the preservation of their State by his future services.”⁴

In spite of all this, Swift did not obtain the promotion he looked for. Somers and Montagu had been eager to do something for him, but being in orders he could not very well be made Under Secretary of State, and Anne had determined that he should not hold any high place in the Church.⁵ Swift was highly indignant, and joined the Tories, forming an alliance with Harley and St. John. From that time he was violently opposed to Somers and abused him in a most spiteful manner in his writings.⁶

Somers still regularly attended the sittings of the House of Lords, and seems to have taken an active part in committees and debates. In January, 1711, the manner in which the war in Spain had been conducted by the Earl of Peterborough was inquired into.⁷ Somers strongly supported the Earl of Galloway⁸ and Lord Tyrawley, who begged for time and allowance to be heard in their own defence for certain charges brought against them. He declared “that the Lords Galloway and Tyrawley had a right to be heard and clear the matters of fact as subjects of Great Britain, and that it was but natural justice that men in danger of being censured should have time to justify

⁴ Works ed. 1883, vol. iii. p. 211.

⁵ Campbell, p. 212.

⁶ Mahon, *England*, vol. i. p. 48. Swift, works ed. 1883, vol. i. p. 48. See also what he writes in his *Journal*: “As for my old friends, if you mean the Whigs, I never see them, as you may find by my journals, except Lord Halifax, and him very seldom; Lord Somers never since the first visit, for he has been a false, deceitful rascal. My new friends are very kind, and I have promises enough,” etc. *Journal to Stella*, *ibid.* vol. ii. p. 155.

⁷ Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 936 *et seq.*

⁸ Spelt also Galway.

themselves."⁹ His arguments, however, were of no avail; a vote of censure was passed on the two lords; but a strong protest was entered upon the journals against the resolution signed by thirty-six peers, amongst whom were Somers, Marlborough and Cowper.¹⁰

At the beginning of the next session of Parliament¹ there was a rumour that the Queen was about to recall the Whigs. Even Swift grew alarmed and wrote in his journal,² December 9, 1711: "I was this morning with Mr. Secretary;³ we are both of opinion that the Queen is false. I told him what I heard, and he confirmed it by other circumstances. I then went to my friend Lewis who had sent to see me. He talks of nothing but retiring to his estate in Wales. He gave me reasons to believe the whole matter is settled between the Queen and the Whigs; he hears that Lord Somers is to be Treasurer, and believes that sooner than turn out the Duchess of Somerset she will dissolve the Parliament and get a Whiggish one. Things are now in the crisis, and a day or two will determine. I have desired him to engage Lord Treasurer, that as soon as he finds the change is resolved on, he will send me abroad as Queen's Secretary somewhere or other, where I may remain till the new ministers recall me; and then I will be sick for five or six months till the storm has spent itself. I hope he will grant me this; for I should hardly trust myself to the mercy of my enemies while their anger is fresh."

But Swift had no need for all this alarm; the Queen had no intention of recalling the Whigs. The negotiations for peace were begun; the nation grew more and more weary of the war and the "Grand Alliance." Unfortunately,

⁹ Chandler, *Lords' Debates*, vol. ii. p. 309; also Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 962.

¹⁰ Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 985.

¹ December, 1711.

² *Journal to Stella*, works ed. 1883, vol. ii. p. 426.

³ St. John—Bolingbroke.

according to Lord Campbell,⁴ no part of Lord Somers's speeches in connection with the peace negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 are extant, although from the Lords' Journals it is seen that he was always present.

Marlborough, on his return to England in 1711, induced the House of Lords to denounce the proposed peace, but the Queen and St. John, who were resolute for peace,⁵ with the support of the nation were determined to secure a peace. They set their minds to a bold stroke. In the "Gazette" of December 31, it was announced that the Queen had dismissed the Duke of Marlborough⁶ from all his employments; and the creation of twelve new Tory peers swamped the Whig majority in the Lords. The Duke withdrew from England and with him all opposition to the peace was gone. The Treaty of Utrecht⁷ was concluded on March 31, 1713.

In 1712 Somers's strength began to fail him. In the early part of the year he had had a severe illness, from which he never quite recovered.⁸ Although he still sat in Parliament, his active life in the world of politics may be said to have ended at this time.

In June, 1713, a debate took place on the question of the Union,⁹ on which occasion the Earl of Finlater moved that the Union should be dissolved. As a result of the extension of the Malt Tax to Scotland and various other grievances, a cry had been raised in Scotland for a "Repeal

⁴ Campbell, p. 214.

⁵ Green, vol. iv. p. 99.

⁶ For fall of Marlborough see Burton, vol. iii. pp. 95-98; also Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. vi. He was succeeded by the Duke of Ormond.

⁷ For treaty see Lecky, vol. i. pp. 122, 123. Hallam, vol. iii. pp. 214-219.

⁸ In a letter written by an adherent of the exiled family, there is the following disguised passage: "All friends here are well except Rowley (Lord Rivers), who is dying; and poor Sanders (Somers), who cannot live long, and is already dead in effect, to the great grief of Harry (Hanover), who depends more on him than on any friend besides." Macpherson, *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 332.

⁹ For whole debate see Cobbett, vol. vi. pp. 1214-1220.

of the Union." Lord Campbell¹⁰ declares that Somers became a "Repealer," the only excuse for this behaviour being "that his mind was debilitated." He, however, also states that Somers took no part in the debate,¹ so there is just as much reason for believing that Somers would not work against the measure which he had carried through with such zeal and trouble.² Anyhow, the proposition was lost, and the Union was not repealed, though only by the small majority of four.³

Though still remorselessly attacked by Swift, Lord Somers was shown every respect by Addison and Steele. Addison dedicated "the Spectator," that paper which had such a remarkable influence, to "John, Lord Somers, Baron of Evesham," followed by an appreciation which is almost too eulogistic. But the manner in which Somers bore his "retirement" is very cleverly alluded to: "It is in vain that you have endeavoured to conceal your share of the merit in the many national services which you have effected. Your lordship appears as great in your private life as in the most important offices which you have borne. I would rather choose to speak of the pleasure you afford all who are admitted into your conversation, of your elegant taste in all polite arts of learning, of your great humanity and complacency of manners, and of the surprising influence

¹⁰ *Lives of the Chancellors*, vol. iv. p. 215.

¹ *Ibid.*

² In his life in *Lives of Eminent Persons* the author says Somers was one of the few who negatived the dissolution (see p. 23). See Onslow's note on Burnet (*Own Times*, vol. vi. p. 160, note t.), where he says the Whig lords supported the Bill for dissolving the Union. "How much to their honour, I will not say. I believe they meant only the distressing of the ministry, but surely there was too much of party violence to make so tender a point an instrument of opposition. I had it from good authority (the late Sir Robert Monroe, then of the House of Commons) that at a meeting upon it at my lord Somers' house, where Monroe was, nobody pressed this motion more than that lord. Good God!" In Cobbett's *Parliamentary History* Somers's name is not mentioned in connection with this debate; but the Lords Sunderland and Halifax are mentioned as having spoken for the "repeal" (vol. vi. pp. 1214-1220).

³ *Ibid.*

which is peculiar to you in making everyone who converses with your lordship prefer you to himself, without thinking the more meanly of his own talents."

When the Queen was seen to be dying, a great stir took place as to the succession. Somers, in spite of infirmities, went to Kensington,⁴ and learning from her physician that the recovery of the Queen was hopeless, he promptly carried out the order of the Council that a troop of Life Guards and the Heralds-at-Arms should be ready to proclaim the Elector of Brunswick King of Great Britain. At the same time a despatch was sent to the Elector, urging him to go with all speed to Holland, whence, on the death of the Queen, he would be brought over by a British squadron to his new kingdom.⁵

On the morning of Sunday, August 1, 1714, Queen Anne died.⁶ Her last act had been to dismiss Harley.⁷ A split had taken place in the Tory party as a result of the policy of St. John.⁸ To this end he had brought in the "Schism Act,"⁹ a persecuting measure to which Harley¹⁰ could not give his support. The Queen, in a weak state of health, had been persuaded to give her patronage to the Bill. Thereby Harley lost the favour of the Queen and was dismissed on July 27.¹¹

After the death of Anne a meeting of the Lords Justices, appointed under the Regency Act, was immedi-

⁴ Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. vi. p. 291. ⁵ Lecky, vol. i. p. 165.

⁶ Green, vol. iv. p. 102. ⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 102, 103.

⁸ He was in communication with the Pretender. Hallam, vol. iii. p. 223.

⁹ This Act allowed no one to keep a public or private school unless he was a member of the Church of England and licensed by the bishop of the diocese. Green, p. 102. For debate concerning "Schism Act" see Cobbett, vol. vi. p. 1349 *et seq.*

¹⁰ Harley, it must be remembered, was by birth a Nonconformist. Though his principles were Tory, he had the Whig love of compromise, and latterly "he had drawn to himself the alienated sympathies of the Dissenters." W. F. Lord, p. 91.

¹¹ Bolingbroke wrote on August 3rd to Swift: "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday, the Queen died on Sunday! What a world is this and how does fortune banter us!" Swift, *Correspondence*, works ed. by Sir W. Scott, vol. xvi. p. 173.

ately held. Owing to his weak state of health, Somers had not been named one of them, but he was present as Privy Councillor and took the oaths of allegiance to the new Sovereign.

George I. showed decided favour to the party which had always supported him.² All the high offices were once more bestowed upon the Whigs.³ Townshend, Walpole and Stanhope became the leaders of the new administration. Lord Somers was too feeble to take any office, but he was sworn of the Privy Council⁴ and a seat in the Cabinet was given to him, together with Marlborough, Sunderland, Halifax, Townshend, Cowper and Stanhope.⁵ He promised to attend whenever he was able, and also to give private advice when consulted by his colleagues. As a mark of gratitude from the King and the nation he received an additional pension of £2,000 per annum for life.⁶

Of the last two years of his life very little is known. They were darkened by illness and suffering, for he had frequent attacks of paralysis.⁷

At intervals his mind seemed to be quite clear. One of these bright times, when he could take interest in what was going on around him, occurred just as the Septennial Bill was being fully discussed.⁸ While the Bill was in agitation, Dr. Friend, the celebrated physician, called on Lord Townshend and informed him that Lord Somers was at that moment restored to the full possession of his faculties, by a fit of gout, which suspended the effect of his paralytic complaint. Townshend immediately waited on Lord Somers, who, as soon as he came into the room, embraced him and said, "I have just heard of the work in which you are engaged and congratulate you upon it. I never approved the Triennial Bill, and always considered

² Hallam, vol. iii. p. 230. Mahon, *England*, vol. i. p. 102.

³ Lecky, vol. i. p. 168.

⁴ Roseoe, p. 161, tit. Somers. Also Coxe, *Lif/ of Marlborough*, vol. vi. p. 361.

⁵ *Ibid.* ⁶ Mahon, vol. i. p. 104. ⁷ Campbell, p. 220. ⁸ April, 1716.

it in effect the reverse of what it was intended. You have my hearty approbation in this business and I think it will be the greatest support possible to the liberty of the country.”⁹

A few days after this interview Lord Somers had a fresh paralytic seizure, from which he never recovered. He died¹ on April 26, the very day on which the Septennial Bill was passed. He was buried in the parish church at Mymms in Hertfordshire, where his sister, Lady Jekyll, placed a simple monument with the short inscription :—

THE RT. HONBLE. JOHN LORD SOMERS,
BARON OF Evesham,
LORD HIGH CHANCELLOR OF ENGLAND IN THE REIGN OF KING WILLIAM III.,
TO WHOSE MEMORY THIS MONUMENT WAS ERECTED BY
DAME ELIZABETH JEKYLL.

Lord Somers was never married. His estates descended to his two sisters, one of whom was married to Sir Joseph Jekyll, the Master of the Rolls, and the other to Charles Cocks of Worcester.²

After his death his MSS. and valuable collection of tracts came into the possession of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, who had married his niece. This collection was put in keeping in the chambers of the Hon. Charles Yorke, in Lincoln's Inn, where it was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1752.³ Nearly all were lost; the few that were saved were collected into one folio volume, of which Hardwicke gives a selection in his State Papers. In the preface he says:⁴ “The world will, however, do that justice to the col-

⁹ For this account, which is quoted, see Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i. p. 139. This Septennial Bill effectually supported the House of Brunswick on the throne, and was no doubt brought forward in order to avoid the danger of an election, which would otherwise have taken place in 1717, before the Whigs were enabled to consolidate their power. It was a bold plan, and was probably only intended to be a temporary measure. It has, however, never been repealed. See Hallam, vol. iii. pp. 235-238.

¹ Green, vol. iv. p. 129.

² Nash, *History of Worcestershire*, vol. ii. p. 54.

³ Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 399. ⁴ *Ibid.*

lection, as not to suppose that these specimens from it, *immitis ignis reliquiae*, will afford an adequate idea of its merit. It filled upwards of 60 volumes in quarto and did not contain a paper from Lord Somers's pen which the most intimate friend would have wished to secrete, or the bitterest enemy could have fairly turned to his prejudice."⁵ Many of the valuable pamphlets which Somers had written and collected were published in the "Somers's Tracts"⁶ under the supervision of Sir Walter Scott. Except for these there is little from which to gather information of Lord Somers, and hardly anything of his personal history and character.

Contemporary historians give very different accounts of the character of Lord Somers. Perhaps the best way, says Lord Macaulay,⁷ to come to a just judgment would be to collect all that has been said about him by Swift and by Addison, who were the two keenest observers of their time, and both knew him well. But the opinion of a man who, simply out of spite and revenge, suddenly turned against him whom he had extolled as the most accomplished and virtuous of men, and ended by calling him "a false, deceitful rascal," counts for little if anything. On the other hand, if left to form our judgment of his character from the pen of Addison, a very exalted character will be the result. His sketch of Somers in "The Freeholder"⁸ is, perhaps, almost too eulogistic and flattering to be wholly accepted. Putting Swift, who is hardly to be trusted, and Addison, who is too partial, aside, we still find that the almost universally accepted verdict is entirely in Somers's favour.

He was, without doubt, a great and a brilliant man of upright character. Born and reared in the corrupt age of the Restoration, he had contracted nothing of the baseness

* Hardwicke, vol. ii. p. 399.

⁵ These tracts were published in four divisions of four volumes each, in the years 1748, 1750, 1751, 1752; the second edition by Sir Walter Scott in 1809.

⁶ Vol. iv. p. 450, note.

* No. 39.

and venality of his age.⁹ He stood above all his colleagues. In the words of Horace Walpole,¹ he was one of those divine men, who, like a chapel in a palace, remain unprofaned, while all the rest is tyranny, corruption and folly."

Lord Macaulay says² he was, in some respects, the greatest man of his age. He certainly was the greatest member of the Junto. "Marlborough" is the name which plays the largest part in the history of the years in consideration, and justly, for his achievements abroad were great, but the name of Somers is too little known. The reigns of William III. and Anne cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the doings and character of Somers, and the very important and influential position he held.

Even Swift,³ in his depreciatory account of Somers, says that "he may very deservedly be reputed the head and oracle of that party" (the Whig party). This he was, without doubt. He had a moderating and restraining influence over his colleagues. He disapproved of their violence and tried to check it, but he never forsook his friends, even when their obstinate neglect of his advice brought ruin upon them.

Perfect patriotism, pure and undefiled by any mixture of self-interest and faction were not the characteristic of his age. The chief aim of the parties—Whig and Tory alike—was to obtain power and when they had obtained it to keep it. Of personal ambition Somers cannot be accused, but ambition for his party he did possess. He was eager that his party should be in power, because he was convinced that the measures it put forward, the security of freedom and liberty for the nation, were the best for his country. That

⁹ Lord Mahon says: "He had touched pitch and was not defiled." *England*, vol. i. p. 209.

¹ *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, works ed. 1798, 4to. vol. i. p. 430.

² *History of England*, vol. iv. p. 447.

³ *History of the Four Last Years of the Queen*, works ed. 1883, vol. v. p. 23.

the means by which he carried out his beneficent ideas in the direction of freedom were not always the most direct and honest cannot be denied. But it must not be forgotten that the political morality of the time he lived in was on a very much lower level than it is now. It was by no means easy to steer a straight course through the seas of party jealousies and intrigues.⁵

His motto, "*Prodesse quam conspicere*," is not an unjust summary of his character. Somers was never eager for fame; he seldom put his name to his publications, and he was very loth to be raised to the peerage, many times refusing the honour before he finally gave in to William, who was so anxious to show him some mark of his esteem.

His generosity has already been remarked upon. He was always willing to give to anything he thought a worthy object. We have seen his munificence to his college,⁶ and his liberal contribution to the expedition of Captain Kidd, which at the time he thought to be a benefit to his countrymen.⁷ Evelyn tells us that in 1696 he subscribed £500 to Greenwich Hospital.⁸ The kindness he showed to Addison proves at the same time his love of letters and his liberality. He was always ready to protect merit in whatever form. Locke⁹ owed opulence to Somers. He was the

⁵ Lord Campbell (vol. iv. p. 226) remarks that the greatest blot on his public character was the persecution of the Roman Catholics in his time, which if he did not prompt he fully sanctioned. Several Acts were passed while Lord Somers was in office, which it is surprising to think he permitted. They were chiefly directed against the Irish Roman Catholics, and as they were all supposed to be Jacobites, it was probably his eagerness to support the king he had largely helped to bring over that led him to adopt a course so opposed to his usual attitude of toleration.

⁶ *Supra*, p. 4.

⁷ *Supra*, p. 32.

⁸ Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. iii. p. 356.

⁹ Locke had great respect for Somers. See his letter dated Feb. 1st, 1696-1697. "I know nobody that can with so much right promise himself to bring me over to his sentiments as your Lordship, for I know not anyone that has such a master-reason to prevail as your Lordship, nor anyone to whom, without attending the convictions of that reason, that I am so much disposed to submit to with implicit faith." King, *Life of Locke*, p. 245. Locke was on Somers's recommendation nominated a Lord of Trade.

benefactor of Leclerc.¹⁰ He was the friend of Filicaja.¹¹ Neither political nor religious differences prevented him from giving his support. He gained for Hickes,² the fiercest and most intolerant of all the non-jurors, allowance to study Teutonic antiquities in quiet. He raised Vertue,³ a staunch Roman Catholic, from poverty and obscurity, who by his aid became one of the first engravers of his time. The distinguishing property of his character was, perhaps, its dignity, a dignity arising from self-respect and inspiring respect in others,⁴ a dignity which made him shun what he thought to be dishonourable or cowardly; a dignity, which made him retire quietly, when dismissed by the King, without giving any signs of ill-will or spite.

Of his abilities as a lawyer, of his intellectual brilliance and of his great learning there is no dispute. Even his detractors are forced to admit the superiority of his powers. Swift⁵ says "he has raised himself by the concurrence

¹⁰ Leclerc (1657-1736), theologian and man of letters.

¹¹ Italian was one of the seven languages with which Somers was familiar without ever having been out of England. Filicaja wrote a Latin ode in praise of Lord Somers. See *Opere di Vincenzo da Filicaja*, tom. ii. p. 50. Also Campbell, vol. iv. p. 223, where part is quoted.

² George Hickes (1642-1715), deprived for refusing to take oath of allegiance to William and Mary in 1690. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* vol. xxvi. p. 350.

³ George Vertue (1684-1756) worked for Michael Van der Gucht; engraver and antiquary; set up for himself 1709. See *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* vol. lviii. p. 285.

⁴ The Duke of Bolton writes to Lord Somers, Sept. 1700: "I tell your Lordship this out of the unalterable friendship and respect I have for you. . . . I beg continuance of your friendship; and you may depend on all the faithful services that your humble servant is capable of." Hardwicke, vol. ii. pp. 439, 440. Tindal, in his Continuation of Rapin, remarks on the esteem in which Somers was held by others. See vol. i. p. 230.

⁵ *Four Last Years of the Queen*, works ed. 1883, vol. v. p. 23. Somerville, in his *Reign of Queen Anne*, p. 257, says: "No person stood higher in the public opinion than he did for abilities, probity, and a steady adherence to the principles which he possessed at his outset in public life. . . . As a judge he was distinguished for his gentleness, patience and impartiality. None ever excelled him in discriminating and arranging the essential branches of a cause; in placing intricate points in a perspicuous light, and levelling them to ordinary comprehension. A clear understanding, and a profound knowledge of the history and laws of England, stamped a superior authority upon his opinions relative to affairs of State, which did not escape the discernment of King William, who confided more in him than in any other counsellor."

of many circumstances to the greatest employments of the State without the least support from birth or fortune. He has an excellent understanding, adorned by all the polite arts of learning."

The Tory Smollett⁵ cannot deny his merits: "He was well skilled in the law, as in many other branches of polite and useful literature. He possessed a remarkable talent for business, in which he exerted great patience and assiduity."

Ralph,⁶ who is inclined to abuse every man of liberal principles, recognizes the greatness of Somers: "In his capacity of Chancellor, Lord Somers is undoubtedly irreproachable; and he that did not acknowledge his abilities in State affairs, must either have none of his own, or, through prejudice and perverseness, must have forfeited the use of them. It was to his abilities as a statesman as well as a lawyer, he owed his advancement. Whether advising as a minister, or standing in the circle as courtier, presiding in the House of Lords as Speaker, conferring or altercating with foreign ministers, giving despatch to suiters, or doing the honours of his table, where he 'became all things to all men,' he was the most extraordinary man of his time."⁸

There is no means of discovering whether Somers deserved the name of a "master orator," which Walpole⁹ gives him. Addison says¹⁰ "his oratory was masculine and persuasive, free from everything trivial and affected." As his speeches have perished, and of the parliamentary proceedings of that time only scanty reports are given, it will always remain mere conjecture. His State papers, which are preserved, are

⁵ Smollett, vol. i. p. 166. ⁶ Ralph, vol. ii. p. 784. ⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Horace Walpole (afterwards Lord Orford) in his *Lives of Noble Authors*.

¹⁰ In the *Freeholder*, No. 39. De Foe in his *Jure Divino* (Book xii.) praised Somers:—

"Somers by nature great and born to rise,
In counsel wary and in conduct wise,
His judgement steady and his genius strong,
And all men own the music of his tongue."

models of terse, luminous and dignified eloquence.¹ His speeches probably had these same qualities, and if we remember that his speech at the famous trial of the Seven Bishops, though quite short, was said to have largely led to the final result, there must have been something remarkable about his oratory, which was convincing and to the point.

His courtesy² and refined manners seem to have attracted attention. Even Queen Anne, who had such a great and unnatural dislike for him, had a great personal regard for Somers.³ Swift, even after he had deserted the Whigs, says: “I have hardly ever known any man with talents more proper to acquire and preserve the favour of a prince; never offending in word or gesture, in the highest degree courteous and complaisant; wherein he set an excellent example to his colleagues, which they did not think fit to follow; but this extreme civility is universal and undistinguished; and in private conversation, where he observes it as inviolably as if it were in the greatest assembly, it is sometimes censured as formal.”⁴

By nature impetuous, Somers had his temper absolutely under control. “Of all the leading statesmen at the time of Anne,” says Lord Mahon,⁵ “the two who appear to have possessed the greatest mastery of temper and powers of self-control are Marlborough and Somers.”

To the accusation against Lord Somers of having offended the laws of society, and of his moral character having shared in the general contamination of the age, which the

¹ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 447.

² *Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 337.

³ “For whom she had as great a personal regard and esteem as her nature was capable of admitting.” Swift, *The Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry*, works ed. 1883, vol. v. p. 274. “He blamed the rough demeanour of some persons to the Queen as a failure in prudence.” Swift, *Four Last Years of the Queen*, works ed. 1883, vol. v. p. 25. Also Burnet, vol. vi. p. 12, and Stanhope, *Queen Anne*, vol. ii. p. 173.

⁴ Swift. vol. v. p. 24.

⁵ Mahon, vol. i. p. 51.

Duchess of Marlborough remarked upon in her private correspondence,⁶ there is no testimony. It is the wiser course, therefore, to pass it over, for there seems little truth attached to it. Whatever his behaviour in private life may have been, in his public career he was immeasurably more upright than those around him. "Everything," writes a contemporary,⁷ "was easy and correct, pure and proper. He was unwearied in the application of all his abilities for the service of his country. As a writer, he greatly assisted the cause of liberty in the days of its utmost peril. As an advocate, a judge, a senator, a minister, the highest praises and the most grateful remembrance are due to his merit. He was invariable and uniform in the pursuit of right paths. As he well understood, he was equally firm in adhering to the interest of his country while in its service and when in a private station. To this uniformity the calumnies and reproaches of his enemies may be ascribed. They envied him his superiority, and as their wishes and designs were far from being engaged for the real welfare of society, a man so upright and able naturally became the object of their hatred; and they had too easy and too much credit."

Of Lord Somers's energy and devoted service to his country,⁸ and of his rigid adherence to his principles there is ample illustration. The statesman who first modelled a constitutional in opposition to an absolutist monarchy, who secured the Protestant Succession to the throne of England, and to whose exertions the Union with Scotland was principally due, will always claim the gratitude and admiration of this country.

⁶ Vol. ii. p. 148.

⁷ *Seward's Anecdotes*, vol. ii. pp. 274-275.

⁸ Marlborough writes to Lord Somers from the Hague, June 7th, 1709: "I know the best way to cultivate your friendship is by continuing to do my duty to the utmost for the public good: and as none can value it more, I shall always make it my endeavour to preserve it, of which your lordship cannot give me a greater instance than by affording me sometimes your good advice in this critical juncture." *Marlborough Despatches*, vol. iv. p. 503.



THOMAS WHARTON.

THOMAS WHARTON.

“THE most universal villain I ever knew.”¹ “Intrinsicallly void of moral or religious principles, the mischievous Wharton.”² “A man of great talents, but profligate character.”³ “The most skilful and the most unscrupulous of the Whig party managers.”⁴ “The scavenger of his party.”⁵ These damaging remarks on the character of Thomas Wharton—which could easily be trebled—sum up in a few words what seem to have been the chief characteristics of the man. He had ability—of a certain kind—no want of courage, no lack of energy or ardour: but he was unscrupulous, without conscience, coarse and violent, possessing an abandoned profligacy of principle which he took no pains to hide from the world. The reputation he has left behind him is that of being the greatest rake and the truest Whig of his time.

Born in 1648, Wharton was a companion of Charles II. and took part in the revels of his dissolute Court. The corrupt morals of that day left their stamp on the mind of Wharton, as they did on the minds of so many others. He grew up in vice and rather than try to disguise it he gloried in it—he defied its effects, either as to his interest or to his constitution; oaths, falsities and profaneness of all kinds were familiar to him; he scoffed at religion and made no concealment of his infidelity. Of shame he knew nothing.

¹ Swift.

² Lord Macpherson.

³ Lord Mahon.

⁴ Lecky.

⁵ Bolingbroke.

The most deliberate of liars,⁶ the grossest insulter, he seemed untouched by insults and invective hurled at himself. His enemies—and he was hated by many with a perfect hatred—assailed him with cutting irony or insolent reproaches, but found that none could draw from him anything but a smile or a good-humoured curse.

Yet, with all these vices Wharton was destined to play an important part in the history of his country. His one redeeming feature was intense devotion to his party. Imbibing as he did all that was most corrupt at the Court of Charles II., his political principles remained uncontaminated; he grew up with a strong attachment to constitutional freedom and an active enemy to Popery and arbitrary power. Born a Whig—a Whig as true as steel he remained to his death. Into the game of politics he threw all he had: talent, energy and money; he freely sacrificed all to the objects of the Whig party. Even in his pastimes this devotion showed itself; horse-racing—and he had the finest stud in England—had twice the charm to him if it meant winning a plate from the Tories or beating the horse of a High Church squire. At elections Wharton's skill and energy were notorious: in the management of mobs, in converting waverers to his views—whether by bribery or corruption—he had no equal; he was a master of the arts of electioneering and political management. In his own county, Buckinghamshire, he was supreme. Other counties also, Yorkshire, Wiltshire, Cumberland, Westmorland, had his support.

⁶ In "A Dialogue of the Dead between the very eminent Signor Gilbertini (Burnet?) and Count Thomaso (Wharton) in the vales of Acheron" (London, 1715), Signor Gilbertini is made to say: "There is the same brow of anger, the same inexorable fierceness of look, the same hatred of honour, honesty and religion! It must be he (Wharton)!" (p. 10.) Count Thomaso says: "In the upper world I laid myself down on the bed of lust without these secret calls for restitution" (p. 11). . . . "I never accounted lying a sin" (p. 30). Lord Dartmouth tells this story of Wharton's practice of open lying (Burnet, *Own Times*, vol. v. p. 234, note t). "I asked him once, after he had run on for a great while in the House of Lords upon a subject that both he and I knew to be false, how he could bring himself to do so. He answered me, 'Why, are you such a simpleton as not to know that a lie well believed is as good as if it were true?'"

Sometimes twenty or even thirty Whigs were named by him, for he spared neither time nor money. That such a man as Wharton, with his coarse, corrupt nature, should run in harness with Somers, who was cultured and refined and gentle, might seem well-nigh impossible. Yet it was so; for many years they acted in concert. They both had the interests of their party at heart and Wharton was too useful to his party to be spared.⁷ Obnoxious as his habits and mode of living were, he was nevertheless affable, good humoured and, to a large extent, popular. In his own county he was welcomed by the people wherever he went and his journeys to the Quarter Sessions resembled those of a royal prince. In the House he was no less useful. A bold, able and fluent, though a coarse and turbulent, speaker, he possessed a ready eloquence with a quick imagination, a biting satire and a wit—coarse but fertile; he possessed the knack of appealing to the passions and prejudices of those whom he addressed and he had no fear of saying what he thought. Of such use, therefore, was Wharton to his party that he was encouraged even by the more conscientious of the Whigs. In spite of his defects he stood high in their estimation, for they appreciated his talents and his activity, and above all they admired his unswerving adherence to their principles and to their cause. He was “Honest Tom” to them.

Of Wharton’s youth hardly anything is known. The most probable date of his birth seems to be 1648.⁸ The Whartons, if the writer of the Memoirs of 1715 is to be relied upon, seem to have been an ancient and honourable family of the North of England. Before the union of the two kingdoms under one king the Whartons and the Musgraves were looked upon as the champions of the Border, which the Scots

⁷ “He was extremely odious to the Tories and as much regarded by the Whigs, to whom he was always very firm and of great use from his abilities, especially in Parliament.” Burnet, vol. v. p. 118, note c.

⁸ Zedler, *Universal Lexicon*; *Nat. Biog.*; *Ency. Brit.*; Chalmers, *Biog. Dict.*, and Cunningham give 1648 as the date of his birth; Macaulay gives 1646.

seldom violated with impunity. An ancestor of Sir Thomas Wharton's—Sir Philip Wharton—had been governor of the city and castle of Carlisle in the 33rd year of Henry VIII., and had distinguished himself by a gallant defence against the invaders. Philip II., fourth Baron Wharton, father of Thomas, first Marquis of Wharton, seems to have been a "peer of virtue, honour and piety,"⁹ one of the greatest "beaux"¹⁰ of his time. He fought on the side of Parliament during the Civil Wars, but besides being an ardent Covenanter he was well known as a staunch Calvinist,¹ entertaining and patronising numbers of Calvinist divines. During the first years of the Long Parliament Wharton supported the policy of the popular leaders in the Commons, and so deep in their secrets was he supposed to be that Charles I. suggested naming him as a witness against the five members.² He seems to have been on quite intimate terms with Cromwell, from whom he received several letters. Among these the most interesting is that written on September 2, 1648, announcing to him the victory of Preston—"this great mercy"—and congratulating him on the birth of a son—which must have been Thomas, the man whose career it is proposed to follow here.³ In 1652 a marriage between Henry Cromwell and Lord Wharton's eldest daughter, the Lady Elizabeth, seems to have been entertained. But apparently "the just scruples of the lady" proved insurmountable and it came to nothing.⁴ Thomas was Philip Wharton's third but eldest surviving son by his second wife,

⁹ *Memoirs of 1715.*

¹⁰ A story is told of him in the *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 5. "He had particularly very fine legs and took great delight to show them in dancing. I remember to have seen him in his old age when those fine legs of his were shrunk almost to the bone, to point to them in that worn and decrepit condition and say: 'Here are the handsome legs which I was so proud of in my youth, see what's the beauty of man that he should take pride in it!'"

¹ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 456. He seems to have gone through periods of great doubt, judging from Cromwell's letters to him. See letters 118, 146, 181.

² Gardiner, vol. x. pp. 16, 130. ³ Carlyle, *Cromwell Letters*, letter 68.

⁴ *Ibid.* Appendix No. 26.

Jane, daughter and heiress of Arthur Goodwyn, of Upper Winchendon, in Buckinghamshire.⁵ Brought up in an atmosphere of the strictest and most austere discipline, in a house where many pleasures were denied him, Wharton seems to have flung himself with double ardour into the voluptuous gaieties of the Restoration Court, when he was old enough to leave home for London. The years 1663 and 1664 seem to have been spent in foreign travel through France, Italy and Germany with a companion, probably his brother Goodwin.⁶ He reaped little if any benefit from this tour other than a strengthening of his love for his mother country. He returned with the opinion that the administration of government in England, with all its drawbacks, was far more likely to bring happiness to the subject than that of any other nation.

He entered Parliament as member for Wendover in 1673, and retained this seat till 1679, when he was returned for Buckinghamshire together with Richard Hampden, son of the celebrated patriot. He continued to represent his county until 1696, when his father died.⁷ Soon after entering Parliament Wharton was married to Anne,⁸ daughter of Sir Henry Lee, fifth Baron of Ditchley. The only advantage of the union, and to Wharton an advantage of the highest importance, was the dowry she brought him, £10,000 and £2,500 a year.⁹ Anne was a rigid Presbyterian, condemning every sort of enjoyment or gaiety, and there was little love lost between them.

Wharton's active interest in politics is first noticeable in the year 1679. The year previous had witnessed the fall of Danby,¹⁰ to whom Charles had given his whole confidence,

⁵ Chalmers, p. 326.

⁶ In *Memoirs of 1715* it is said he went with a tutor.

⁷ Zedler.

⁸ Date of their marriage was September 16th, 1673.

⁹ We are told that the lady's person was not "so agreeable to the bridegroom as to secure his constancy." There were no children to the marriage.

¹⁰ To Danby England owed much, for he arranged the marriage of Mary with the Prince of Orange. For full account of Danby's administration see Hallam, vol. ii. chap. xii,

and England thrown into a state of popular panic by the "great national delusion of the Popish Plot"¹—a conspiracy to slay the King and introduce a French army into the realm in order to place the Duke of York, the King's Romanist brother, on the throne. The Parliament which followed brought in the Exclusion Bill² and Wharton joined his friends, Lords Russell, Cavendish and Colchester, in supporting it. He does not appear to have spoken,³ but he gave his vote in its favour and was one of those who carried it up to the Lords.⁴ The feeling of the nation and of the House of Commons was so strongly in favour of the exclusion of the Duke of York that but for the opposition of the Lords, largely influenced by Halifax,⁵ a man of great ability, the Bill must in the end have been carried. This would have dispensed with the necessity for the Revolution of 1688. As it was, the Bill was thrown out, Parliament was dissolved and the promoters of the Bill had little hope of gaining their point except by insurrection. Wharton's name also appears as one of those who signed a presentment to the Grand Jury of Middlesex in 1680 with reasons for indicting the Duke of York for not attending church.

In 1685 Charles II. died, and the Duke of York, whom the promoters of the Exclusion Bill would have proscribed,

¹ Called so by Hallam, vol. ii. p. 423. For an account of the Popish Plot see Green, vol. iii. p. 410 *et seq.*

² For Exclusion Bill see Macaulay, vol. i. p. 258 *et seq.*; Cooke, vol. i. p. 153; Green, vol. iii. p. 430.

³ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 13; *Lives of Eminent Englishmen*, p. 68; and in Cunningham. It is supposed he did not speak for fear of being branded a fanatic. *Nat. Biog.*

⁴ He voted for the Bill in November, 1680. It was carried up to the Lords, November 15th. It was at this time that the germs of the two great parties, Whig and Tory, showed themselves. The nation became divided into two factions of "Petitioners" and "Abhorriers." Numberless petitions were sent from all parts of the country for the assembling of Parliament in order to renew the attack upon the Crown, and numerous counter petitions came from those who expressed their "abhorrence" at the idea of the Crown being touched. These factions began to be known by the names, each originally a term of reproach, of Whig and Tory, which ever since have been accepted terms.

⁵ Known as "the Great Trimmer."

became King James II., a Roman Catholic Sovereign. With the death of the King the royal revenue ceased and Parliament was immediately called. The country, full of hope that James would keep his word "to preserve this government both in Church and State as it is now by law established,"⁶ voted for the settlement of the revenue upon James for life. Wharton was one of the very few who opposed this measure, fearing that a portion of it would be spent on the maintenance of a standing army, for which he thought there should be a limited sum:⁷ "Mr. Speaker, kings in old times used not only to send an account of their revenues, but of the charge they were going to be as to the Parliament when they demanded aids. Henry V. had but £56,000 and Queen Elizabeth had £160,000 and odd pounds yearly. I am for a Bill for making the Militia useful and would know if we give money thus whether it be not setting up a standing army; I am for good Guards."⁸

The Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles II. and having no claim to the Crown whatever, gathered together a body of men and invaded the realm.⁹ Wharton was suspected of being in league with him and his house at Winchendon was unsuccessfully searched.

During the reign of James II. Wharton lived quietly at his seat at Winchendon, which he preferred to Wooburn,¹⁰ and took little active part in Parliament. He worked, however, for the rejection of the old dynasty and for bringing over the Prince of Orange to be King. He corresponded with the Prince during 1688 and is supposed to have had much to do with the framing of the invitation which induced William to land in England.¹ Wharton was among the

⁶ Green, vol. iv. p. 6. James very soon, however, showed himself a Romanist heart and soul.

⁷ The same source says that he was for £400,000 to be given to the use of a standing army. *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 17.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 16.

⁹ For Monmouth's rising see Green, vol. iv. p. 8.

¹⁰ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 21.

¹ *Memoirs of Kit-Cat Club*, p. 73. He is supposed to have drawn up the first sketch of the invitation of the Prince to come to England, which was carried over to Holland by the Earl of Shrewsbury. Chalmers, p. 326.

first to go to meet the future King at Exeter and to welcome him to his new kingdom.² But, perhaps, his satirical poem "Lilliburlero," which Wharton wrote in 1687, helped as much as anything to turn public feeling against the Stuarts. It was a ballad on the administration of Tyrconnel, in which an Irishman congratulates a fellow on the approaching victory of Popery and the Irish race. These verses, which were no more than the ordinary street poetry of the day, set to a quick lively tune by Purcell, caught the fancy of the nation. It was sung by all, far and wide, and became especially the song of the army. "The whole army," says Burnet, "and at last all people in city and country, were singing it perpetually. And perhaps never had so slight a thing so great an effect."³

Ho ! broder Teague, dost hear de decree ?
 Lilli burlero, bullen, a-la,
 Dat we shall have a new deputie,
 Lilli burlero, bullen, a-la.

The English confusion to Popery drink,
 Lilli burlero, bullen, a la, etc., etc.*

Wharton is said to have boasted that he had sung a king out of three kingdoms.

It was in the Convention Parliament of 1688-9 that Wharton's political career may be said to have begun. He strongly supported Lord Somers and other Whigs in their view that the "throne was vacant" and that no one so fitted as the Prince of Orange could be found to fill the throne. "Abdication and dereliction are hard words to use, but I would have no loophole to let in the King; for I believe not myself nor any Protestant in England safe, if you admit

² Boyer, *History of William III.*, 1702 ed. vol. i. p. 242.

³ Burnet, vol. iii. p. 336.

* It was first printed in 1688 on a single sheet as "A New Song" with the air above the words (*Brit. Mus. Cat.* 38, vol. i. p. 25). Its effect was emphasised in "A Pill to Purge State Melancholy 1715." Sterne introduces it into *Tristram Shandy* as the favourite air of "my Uncle Toby" who had fought at the Boyne and at Namur. It is in the *State Poems* and in the *Percy Reliques*, ed. by R. A. Willmott, p. 367.

him. Consider of it a thousand years, and you cannot cast your eyes upon a person so well to fit it as the Prince and Princess of Orange. To them we owe all our safety; most of us, by this time, must either have been slaves to the Papists, or hanged."⁴ In February, 1689, a few days after the Proclamation of William and Mary as King and Queen of England, Wharton was appointed a Privy Councillor⁵ and Comptroller of the Household,⁶ which post he occupied during the whole of the reign. In that capacity the King sent through him a message to the House in relation to the remission of the Hearth Tax.⁷ He delivered the message with these words: "I cannot but say this is the greatest honour the King can do me, to make me a messenger of his. I have seen messages for money, but it is the first I ever heard of this kind for the King to part with a revenue. I am to acquaint you further, a little more fully than in this paper, viz., that the King was the first that moved this in Council. He did it for the ease of the people and would always do so; he and only he, is to have the honour of it."⁸

William showed consideration for his subjects by abolishing this tax. It was one of the most unjust and obnoxious of the taxes for it pressed most heavily upon the poor.⁹ The revenue was settled on a peace footing at £1,200,000 a year, the hereditary taxes being given to William for the support of his Crown. This, at the present day, constitutes the Civil List.¹⁰ The following year Wharton accompanied William to the Hague¹ to attend the Congress, where there was a large assembly of princes from all parts. William presided over a meeting, and his speech setting forth the

⁴ *Parl. Hist.* vol. v. pp. 39, 52.

⁵ Cooke, *Hist. of Party*, vol. i. p. 495. Boyer, *ut supra*, vol. ii. p. 1.

⁶ Boyer, *ut supra*, vol. ii. p. 2. ⁷ *Ibid.* p. 13.

⁸ *Parl. Hist.* vol. v. p. 152. ⁹ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 36.

¹⁰ For Civil List see Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 558. Hallam, *Constit. Hist.*, vol. iii. p. 116.

¹ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 22. They set out Jan. 6th, 1690. *Lords' and Commons' Journals*, Jan. 5th, 1690.

necessity of strong union and vigorous action against the growing power of France was received with respect by his German allies.² Wharton, however, in spite of being the holder of the White Staff, never really gained the confidence of the King. William personally disliked him, and in spite of his activity as one of his followers and in spite of his eager ambition for promotion, William never advanced him to any post of great importance.

Wharton took a small part in the debate on the Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill³ and in the discussion on the supply in 1690,⁴ when he declared £1,500,000 to be the smallest sum that could be voted for the purpose of carrying on the war. He is likewise mentioned as having spoken on the important question concerning an abjuration of King James. All the Whigs were for it, arguing that it was merely intended to be a security to the government during the war; the main body of the Tories were dead against it and much to the disgust of the Whigs persuaded the King to order the House to let the matter drop.⁵ The East India Company, which had been incorporated by Queen Elizabeth, exercised a considerable sway in the city of London; the trade with that country was always on the increase and this Company, which had the monopoly of the trade, was making enormous profits. After the Revolution the power of granting monopolies in trade had been withdrawn from the Crown, but the old East India Company had succeeded in retaining its privileges by corruption, Sir Joshua Child, its president, being the chief agent in these low practices.⁶ In 1695, Parliament⁷ enquired carefully into the corruption of

² Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 8.

³ *Parl. Hist.* vol. v. p. 272. This was in the year 1689. ⁴ *Ibid.* p. 569.

⁵ For this debate in full see *Parl. Hist.* vol. v. p. 594 *et seq.*; Burnet, vol. iv. pp. 78-81; Ralph, *Hist.* vol. ii. p. 198.

⁶ For career of the Company, see Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 129 *et seq.*; Townsend Warner, *Landmarks in English Industrial History*, p. 202 *et seq.* The importance of this Company lies in the fact that it brought us our Indian Empire.

⁷ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 545.

different public offices, and the East India Company was accused of having been guilty of bribery. Trevor, Seymour and Leeds were named as having received bribes at their hands. A committee was appointed to inspect the books of the Company and to enquire into the matter, and Wharton was placed in the chair.⁸ He, with his usual quickness and boldness, had grasped the opportunity which he saw could be turned to the advantage of his party. He, a man who would have thought nothing of taking bribes himself, who, in fact, thought it an everyday occurrence to corrupt some one if it could serve his purpose, now boldly appeared in public as being grieved at the baseness of the age. He moved that Danby, now Duke of Leeds, should be impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours.⁹ Leeds tried to excuse himself, but the verdict of the nation, though never more than an informal one, was against him. For Wharton this was enough. Leeds was disgraced and no longer in power; the Whigs were triumphant. By this time, it must be remembered, William had definitely shown his preference for the Whigs. Since the general election of 1690 that party had been gradually gaining ground; it was now the predominating party both in numbers and in strength. The leading Whigs had found that strength lay in union, and a union of the closest began to exist between the five men of the Junto.¹⁰

On the death of his father in 1696, Thomas Wharton succeeded to the barony with a clear income of £8,000 a year. On February 24, he took his seat in the House of Peers.¹ Four years prior to this he had married for a

⁸ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 26; Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 554; Boyer, *William III.*, vol. iii. p. 16.

⁹ For this in full see Journals of the two Houses, April 27th, 1695; and Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 551 *et seq.*

¹⁰ Somers was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal.

¹ *Lords' Journals*, vol. xv. p. 679.

second time, Lucy, daughter of Lord Lisburne, who brought him £5,000 a year. By this marriage there were three children²—Philip, afterwards Duke of Wharton, who carried profligacy and profanity even to a higher pitch than his father, and two daughters. Although strongly supported by the Whigs who had put him on the throne, William never really held a secure seat. Jacobite plots were rife, plots to assassinate the King and bring back James, with the help of France. In 1696 one such plot was discovered and a search for the conspirators was made. Sir John Fenwick, a man who had worked with energy against the government and who had treated the late Queen³ with personal insolence, became the subject of a famous State Trial,⁴ when a Bill of Attainder was brought against him. Wharton, one of the Lords Temporal, was in favour of the Bill, and pushed it forward with vigour. “Here is a Bill to attaint Sir John Fenwick of high treason; if I do reject the Bill I do declare him not guilty, and if I do think him guilty I do declare against my own judgment, for my judgment here is not bound up as a man’s judgment upon a jury, for his judgment is bound up to proof according to law, and my judgment is bound up by my own belief. This is the proof I must go by; and I think every man is bound in justice and duty to his country, as he believes Sir John Fenwick to be guilty, to be for the commitment of this Bill, and till any gentleman will convince me that this is not a rule I am to go by, I must continue in this opinion.”⁵

It became a heated party controversy and the condemnation and execution of Fenwick,⁶ infamous as it was, was welcomed by the Whigs as a victory to them.⁷

² Chalmers, p. 330.

³ She died from smallpox on Dec. 28th, 1694, aged 33 years.

⁴ Howell, *State Trials*, vol. xiii. p. 755. See also Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 740 *et seq.*; Burnet, *Own Times*, vol. iv. p. 327 *et seq.*; *Parl. Hist.* vol. v. p. 998 *et seq.*; Hallam, *Constit. Hist.* vol. iii. p. 131.

⁵ *Parl. Hist.* vol. v. p. 1088.

⁶ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 768.

⁷ *Supra*, Somers, p. 22.

It was felt by Wharton, who was now a peer of no small income and who was eager for power and distinction, as felt by his friends, that he should be given some important place in the ministry. In 1697 the Secretaryship was vacated by the retirement of Trumbull⁸ and the Whigs pushed Wharton forward as a suitable successor.⁹ Much to their disappointment, Vernon was chosen. The appointment of Vernon disconcerted the Whig chiefs,¹⁰ for the promotion of Wharton seemed thereby rendered more remote than ever. The resignation of Shrewsbury would be necessary before he could be pushed into office. Shrewsbury had for long expressed a wish to resign, but William, who had a personal regard for him and who foresaw with dread the domineering Wharton taking his place, spared no effort to retain him in the administration. A compromise was made by which Shrewsbury retained the seals and Wharton was partially gratified by being made Chief Justice in Eyre, in the place of the Earl of Abington,¹ and Lord Lieutenant for Oxfordshire. As Lord Lieutenant Wharton showed his zeal for pure Whig principles by removing five heads of colleges from the Commission of Peace and putting in twenty-four new ones.² The Whigs were heartily indignant at the frustration of their hopes, and vented their anger upon Robert, Lord Sunderland, who was suspected of having had most influence in the matter. He was openly attacked in Parliament; fear of being discovered in connection with some of his many past machinations obliged him to resign his office³ as the only escape from impeachment. This helped largely to alienate William from the Whigs. Sun.

⁸ Cooke, *Hist. of Party*, vol. i. p. 534.

⁹ Burnet, vol iv. p. 325, note u.

¹⁰ Somers to Shrewsbury, Dec. 9th-19th, 1697. Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 505.

¹ April 22nd, 1697. "The Lord Wharton has kissed the King's hand for the place of Chief Justice in Eyre in room of the Earl of Abington." Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 215.

² Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 298.

³ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 377.

derland, his favourite, persecuted, as he thought unjustly,⁴ and the Whigs still clamouring for the advancement of Wharton, filled him with disgust. He left England for the Continent, with little hope of ever reconciling Sunderland to the Whig party. In the following March⁵ the King and the Duke of Shrewsbury were the guests of Lord Wharton at Wooburn,⁶ and a year later they stood godfathers to his son while the Princess of Denmark was godmother.⁷

The elections of 1698 showed that the tide had turned and the popularity of the Whig party was no longer what it had been. To their mortification they found themselves censured as the advocates of a standing army, accused of partiality and oppression in support of their bold project of the new East India Company,⁸ accused of imposing the burdens which the war had rendered necessary, and in addition rapidly losing the confidence of the King.⁹ Many disappointments were in store for them. Even Wharton, the champion of the art of electioneering, was disgusted to find himself beaten where he had hitherto exercised uncontrolled influence. He failed at Brackley, at Cockermouth and at Malmesbury. He lost possession even of his own strongholds, Wycombe and Aylesbury; he was defeated in Oxfordshire; and his own county of Buckinghamshire, up till now so loyal, rejected one of his candidates.¹⁰ This sudden and decided reverse to the fortunes of the Whigs was the forerunner of even worse times for them, for they were to witness their leading men undergo the humiliation of public impeachment. During all these years the question

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 379.

⁵ March, 1698.

⁶ Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 359.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 469. Jan. 5th, 1699.

⁸ See Montagu, *post*, p. 140.

⁹ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 383.

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 129. See Somers to Shrewsbury, Aug. 16th-26th, 1698. Coxo, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 553. Also Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 152. "My Lord Wharton has been run down in all places; it was thought he might make a stand in Oxfordshire, but that failed like the rest."

of the succession to the Crown of Spain had been much exercising the minds of William and his ministers. Anxiety to avert a war and at all costs to prevent the further encroachment of France had induced William, with the advice of Somers, to sign the First Partition Treaty.² Foreign polities, with which Somers had so much to do, did not touch Wharton very closely. An offer of the Spanish Embassy had been made to him, but he declined it with his usual want of grace.³ Consequently he escaped impeachment, which Somers, Orford and Halifax had later to undergo, the main charge made against them being their share in the Partition Treaties.⁴

Horse racing, duelling, and other interests of a similar kind were carried on by Wharton with vigour throughout the whole of his parliamentary career. In 1699 his famous horse "Careless" beat one backed by the Duke of Devonshire for £1,900 at Newmarket.⁵ To go on a few years, his horse "Chance" won the Plate, £150, at the Quantain race,⁶ he won the Duke of Marlborough's Plate at Woodstock⁷ and even as late as 1715, the year of his death, he ran a horse and won his Majesty's Plate, value 100 guineas.⁸ For his famous horse "Gelding" Louis XIV. in vain offered 1,000 pistoles.⁹ Wharton was equally successful at duelling. In the years 1699 and 1703 he took part in election duels. "Some days since," notes Luttrell in his diary, "a duel was fought in Bucks between the Lords Wharton and Cheney and the latter disarmed."¹⁰ A dauntless swordsman, with constant presence of mind and

² October 11th, 1698. See *supra*, p. 30, Somers.

³ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 410. Coxe, *ut supra*, p. 547.

⁴ For Partition Treaties see Somers, *supra*, pp. 30, 31.

⁵ Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 505. Saturday, April 15th, 1699. Muir, *Newmarket Calendar*, p. 29.

⁶ Luttrell, vol. v. p. 588. ⁷ *Ibid.* p. 595.

⁸ *Newmarket Calendar*, p. 44. ⁹ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 458.

¹⁰ July, 1699. Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 539. Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 324.

great agility of body, his skill was the envy of duellists of the time. He is said to have declared that he vowed to himself never to give or refuse a challenge and that it had been his particular happiness that in several duels in which he was engaged he had never killed an antagonist or himself been worsted.¹¹

In spite of his exertions and devotion to England, William never really gained the love of his subjects. Complaints were continually being made against him; lavish grants of land to his personal favourites, many of whom were foreigners,¹ excited much jealousy and a heated debate on the subject took place between the Houses.² The Crown lands had been constantly dealt with according to the King's pleasure, without the interference of Parliament. In giving these away William was simply doing what his predecessors had done; but the case of estates recently forfeited in Ireland was quite different. In 1690 a Bill ordering them to be applied to the public service had not passed into law, owing to the King's departure for the Continent, but he had promised the Commons another opportunity of settling the question. No steps having been taken since that date, William evidently considered himself entitled to act as he wished. The Commons had had their opportunity many times over and not used it. The forfeited lands amounted to about 1,700,000 acres, a fourth of which had been restored to its ancient holders, according to the Limerick pacification.³ At the end of the session of 1699 the Commons had tacked to the Land Tax Bill a clause appointing seven Commissioners to enquire into the matter.⁴ They visited Ireland and presented their report.⁵ Unable

¹¹ *Memoirs of 1715*, pp. 32, 33.

¹ The Earl of Portland and the Countess of Orkney were among the favoured ones. Hallam, vol. iii. p. 141.

² Macaulay, vol. v. p. 261. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 404.

³ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 264.

⁴ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 405.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 436.

to arrive at any decision, the Commons brought in a Resumption Bill,⁶ which vested all the forfeited lands in the hands of trustees and offered rewards to any discovering lands which ought to have been confiscated. Prepared for opposition, they again tacked this Bill to the Land Tax Bill.⁷ But the Lords were determined not to accept it without a struggle; little as they liked the foreigners, they could not allow themselves to be so easily overridden. It passed, nevertheless, the second reading. On the third reading many amendments were proposed and carried. Wharton was the leader of the Whigs on this occasion⁸ and boldly proposed amendments which were accepted, and in its new form the Bill was sent down to the Lower House. The Commons were at one—the amendments were rejected, and added to this the nation supported them.⁹ Threatening to become a serious breach between the two Houses, in danger of breaking the peace at home, which, to William, was so necessary, he urged the Lords to give way. The Bill was passed without amendments.¹⁰ The great men of the Junto were far too clear-headed not to foresee that to continue in opposition any longer would be mere rashness. It was obvious that the Lords could not have the nation with them and that if a general election were to take place it would be greatly to their disadvantage. Somers, in his room of sickness, had pronounced this opinion, and his colleagues agreed

⁶ Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 631.

⁷ This practice of tacking a Bill to a Money Bill so as to render it impossible for the Lords even to modify them without depriving the King of his supply tended to subvert the Constitution and annihilate the rights of a co-equal House of Parliament. Hallam, vol. iii. p. 142.

⁸ Somers was absent owing to illness. Macaulay, vol. v. p. 275. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 439.

⁹ "Whilst the Bill was in suspense the whole city of London was in an uproar." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 439, note g.

¹⁰ To be obliged to pass this Bill without amendments was a precedent infinitely dangerous to the legislative power of the Lords. Hallam, vol. iii. p. 142. "The whole of the business relating to these forfeitures, as carried on by all parties, was a great reproach to the times. There was neither justice nor public spirit in it, of either side." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 441, note l.

with him. Some abstained from voting. Wharton, who had exerted himself so strenuously in favour of the amendments, beat a retreat and left hurriedly for Newmarket.¹

Meanwhile the question of the Spanish Succession, which had been at any rate for a time settled by the First Partition Treaty, was reopened in 1699 by the death of the Electoral Prince,² to whom the bulk of the Spanish dominions had been allotted. This had driven William to suddenly prorogue Parliament.³ For some reason, probably to quiet the opposition in the House, he had removed the great Lord Somers from office and placed the Great Seal in the hands of an unworthy successor, Sir Nathan Wright. The death of the third claimant made a Second Partition Treaty necessary. It was thereupon agreed that the Spanish dominions should pass to the Archduke Charles.⁴ A debate took place in the Lords,⁵ in which House the Partition Treaty was much disapproved of. After three days' debate they resolved to frame an address to the King, complaining both of the treaty and of the method in which it had been carried on. Lord Wharton moved an addition to this address. "That, whereas the French King had broke that treaty they should advise His Majesty to treat no more with him, or rely on his word, without a real security."⁶ This was opposed by all who were against a new war, but the majority of the House approved of it, agreeing that the treachery of the French negotiations made some pledge necessary.

The Tories were dissatisfied with the Partition Treaties; being against an increase of the standing army, they objected

¹ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 281. Ranks, vol. vi. p. 212. Also Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. 16. "And now he is railed at in both Houses."

² He, being the least powerful of the three claimants, was to receive most.

³ April 11th, 1700. ⁴ Son of the Emperor Leopold.

⁵ March 14th, 1700-1701. *Parl. History*, vol. v. p. 1238.

⁶ *Parl. History*, vol. v. p. 1241. Rapin, vol. i. p. 452. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 482.

to England's interference on the Continent. Out of mere revenge they impeached those Whig lords who had had a chief share in their formation. But with a total failure in their object, instead of gaining, they lost the approval of the country. The death of Charles III. of Spain in 1700 and of James II. in 1701 wholly altered the situation. The Crown of Spain was offered to and accepted by Louis XIV.'s grandson Philip, and on the death of James, Louis, regardless of the Treaty of Ryswick,⁷ recognized the Prince of Wales as James III. of England. At this critical juncture William needed more than the support of the Whigs, the upholders of the principles of the Revolution and the Act of Settlement. Parliament was dissolved.⁸ An excited general election took place, at which the country answered the call of the King. Whigs were returned; they once more got the upper hand in the capital⁹ and in the country they gained much of the ground which they had lost. Wharton again reigned supreme in Buckinghamshire;¹⁰ the University of Cambridge, which hitherto had favoured the Tories, defeated their candidate and brought in the Whig, Isaac Newton, with flying colours.¹ Supplies were willingly voted by the new Parliament. Europe was arming and England was preparing to check the daring encroachment of France, when William suddenly died² and the work which it had been his ambition to perform passed into other hands. But it is to no new epoch when we pass from William to Anne. The same principles are at work, the same influences are to be

⁷ By which Louis recognised William as King of England.

⁸ The English were indignant at being dictated to by Louis. "This gave a universal distaste to the whole English nation: all people seemed possessed with a high indignation upon it, to see a foreign power, that was at peace with us, pretend to declare who ought to be our King. . . . The city of London began, and all the nation followed, in a set of addresses, expressing their abhorrence of what the French king had done." Burnet, vol. iv. p. 543.

⁹ Four Whig members were returned. Macaulay, vol. v. p. 302.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 303.

¹ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 303.

² *Ibid.* p. 305.

seen ; the same characters, with the exception of the Sovereign, are on the stage. William, whose one policy abroad had been to keep France from becoming predominant in Europe, bequeathed his policy to Marlborough, in whom he had a competent successor. It had been entirely through the persistent energy of William that the Grand Alliance, the only chance of resistance to Louis, has been formed, and though his death followed almost immediately, his work did not cease with him ; he had set the machine in motion and it continued to move even after the death of the prime mover. In the sympathies of the new Sovereign, however, there was a very noticeable change. The High Church Tory party were soon in evidence and the government of the country was soon transferred from the hands of the Whigs, whose representative had been William, into those of the Tories, who looked up to the new Queen as their chief. The new reign began with the Tories in full power but in the somewhat inconsistent attitude of being forced to continue the Whig policy which William had begun, the policy of consistent opposition to France.³ From words uttered in her first speech from the throne the Whigs could fully see that they need hope for little sympathy from Anne : " As I know my own heart to be entirely English, I can very sincerely assure you there is not anything you can expect of me which I shall not be ready to do for the happiness and prosperity of England, and you shall always find me a religious and strict observer of my word."⁴ Her stress on the fact that she was " entirely English " could, perhaps, be hardly anything but a reflection on William, who had never succeeded in making his subjects entirely forget that he was a Dutchman. The Comptrollers' Staff was taken from Wharton to be given 'to that bully of the party, Sir Edward

³ It had always been Marlborough's desire to form an administration composed of the moderate men of both parties, but Anne was against this seemingly when she came to the throne. See Coxe, *Memoirs of the Duke*.

⁴ *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 5.

Seymour,"⁵ and his name was struck out of the list of Privy Councillors.⁶ Loss of office, however, did not damp the vigour of the Lord Wharton. In the Conference with the House of Commons with regard to the Occasional Conformity Bill he was one of the managers for the Lords and an opposer who showed much untiring zeal. His exertions resulted in the acceptance of the amendments and the Bill was dropped for the session. Wharton was personally attacked in connection with his apparently atheistical attitude, and, in replying, confessed that though "he was by education a Dissenter he was a Churchman by choice," and as a proof of this he declared that he kept a chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Kingford, at Winchendon, who read the Church of England prayers in his house twice a day in the presence of his servants.⁷ Nevertheless his open contempt for all religion remained a well-known fact.

Later an amended Bill was passed by the Commons but again thrown out by the Lords. Wharton urged the Lords to give their attention to the state of Scotland and Ireland instead of wasting their time in annoying the Dissenters at home.⁸ His success in preventing the Bill from being passed did not add to his already diminishing popularity with the majority in the Lower House. The attitude which he took up in the Aylesbury franchise case rendered him even more peculiarly disliked. This case⁹ was one in which the freedom and dignity of Englishmen were at stake. The returning officers for the borough of Aylesbury had been known to reject the vote of Mathew Ashby in favour

⁵ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 36. Cunningham, *History of Great Britain*, says that Anne took Wharton's staff and handed it to Seymour before his face. Sir G. Seymour was a special foe of Wharton's, whom he had done hard to injure over the East India enquiry. *Nat. Biog.* article Wharton.

⁶ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 36.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 38:

⁸ In this motion Wharton was supported by the Tory Haversham. Wyon, vol. i. p. 217.

⁹ For Aylesbury franchise case see Hallam, vol. iii. pp. 273-276; *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 225 *et seq.*; Howell, vol. xiv. p. 695 *et seq.*; Wyon, vol. i. p. 227 *et seq.*; and Burton, *Queen Anne*, vol. i. p. 118.

of their own friends. Ashby brought an action against the returning officer, who happened to be the mayor, William White; after a long dispute in the Court of the Queen's Bench, Ashby received no support. Wharton, who recognized that Ashby had a perfect right to exercise the franchise, and who also saw in the dispute a means of furthering Whig influence, gave his firm support to Ashby and helped him to bring his case before the House of Lords in February, 1704. In this court Ashby was the victor and there was no small significance in the fact, for by it the franchise of Englishmen had been put under the protection of the common law.¹⁰ The prisoners, Ashby and his fellow burgesses, are said to have been kept and managed by Wharton when at Newgate.¹¹

Wharton's indefatigable energy in the cause of his party had further opportunity of showing itself in the elections of 1705. He spared neither time nor money; he is said to have spent upwards of £12,000 and to have insured the return of more than thirty Whig members.² The new House, which met in October, whether a result of Wharton's efforts or not, showed a distinct change in favour of the Whigs. Their influence was undoubtedly growing and it seemed to be the wish of the Government to form a coalition with them, for several high offices were given or promised

¹⁰ It may perhaps be added that Wharton was the first person to teach his countrymen that their votes possessed a pecuniary value, and to divert the golden stream which had formerly flowed into the pockets of returning officers into the pockets of electors. Wyon, vol. i. p. 228.

¹¹ Rapin, vol. i. p. 682. Burnet, vol. v. i. p. 195, note l. The writer of the *Memoirs of 1715* says that it was largely owing to the zeal and management of Wharton that his borough was saved from the hands of the Jacobites. He was put to a vast expense to prosecute the suit, in doing which he asserted the right of every elector in England. "To prosecute a suit attended with so much cost, fatigue and vexation against the opinion of the Court of the Queen's Bench, against the votes of the House of Commons, and to do it successfully, must be the effects of the utmost greatness and vigour of mind" (p. 55). Also Burnet, vol. v. p. 118, note o: "It was made a party contest and carried on for the sake of that. Lord Wharton was much concerned in it personally, the borough of Aylesbury being one of those he had election interests in and which he applied himself to whenever he could, and with all sorts of management in which he was very dexterous."

² *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 41.

to Whigs.³ Marlborough's connection with that party became closer through the marriage of his daughter to Sunderland; his sympathies seemed to be drifting over to the Junto, in which body he recognized the chief talent and strength of the country lay. Wharton's ardour and loyalty gained for him a considerable influence with the leaders of the Whigs. In April of 1705 the Queen visited the University of Cambridge and dined in the Hall of Trinity College. Wharton accompanied her and was admitted, with others of position, to an honorary degree of LL.D.⁴

On the debate concerning a Regency being resumed it was opened by Lord Wharton in a manner that, according to Bishop Burnet,⁵ charmed the whole house, and the Earl of Dartmouth adds a note in which he says: "This charming Lord Wharton had the most provoking insolent manner of speaking that I ever observed in any man, without any regard to civility or truth."⁶ It is a little difficult to discover wherein the charm lay!

The following year Wharton became Viscount Winchendon in the county of Bucks, and Earl of Wharton in the county of Westmorland.⁷ But these honours by no means satisfied his ambition; he aspired to an important position in the Government, to have some office where he could exercise his power, and he was continually clamouring for some such appointment. Marlborough was able to quiet him to some extent by promising to give him the Viceroyalty of Ireland when it should become vacant.⁸ To be named an English Commissioner⁹ for the Treaty of Union with Scotland, which took place in April of 1706, was no small

³ Rooke was superseded by a Whig as Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet. The Duke of Newcastle was admitted as Privy Seal in place of the Tory Duke of Buckingham.

⁴ *Nat. Biog.*

⁵ Burnet, vol. v. p. 234.

⁶ *Ibid.* note t.

⁷ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 56.

⁸ Boyer, *ut supra*, p. 311.

⁹ For full list of Commissioners see Cobbett, vol. vi. pp. 534, 535. For debate in the Lords see *ibid.* p. 561 *et seq.* See also Mackinnon, *Union of England and Scotland*; Burnet, vol. v. p. 295; Luttrell, vol. vi. p. 127; Wyon, vol. i. p. 442.

gratification to Wharton, for he had the Union much at heart.¹⁰ All the five members of the Junto worked for the Union. Lord Somers, as we have already seen,¹¹ devoted much time and thought to effect it and Wharton was no less ardent: his name always figures in the debates on this all important measure and he contributed his share to the great task of getting it through.¹² The year 1706 may, perhaps, be taken as the time in Wharton's political career when he first began to act deliberately in junction with the Whig Junto.¹³ On May 10, he sent by Halifax a complimentary letter to the Elector of Hanover¹⁴ in which he put forward his endeavour to serve his country as much to his credit. He received a gratifying reply from the Elector.¹⁵ It was not till 1708, however, that Wharton's services to his country received, as he himself thought, full recognition. The death of the Prince¹⁶ meant a shuffling of the higher offices in the State. Pembroke was declared Lord High Admiral of Great Britain and Ireland in the place of the Prince; of the posts which he had already held he was deprived. The Presidency of the Council was given to Somers and Wharton was named Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.¹⁷ The Whigs seemed now for a brief period contented and the storm of the new session, which had been looked forward to with dread by Godolphin, subsided into a

¹⁰ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 45.

¹¹ *Supra*, pp. 50, 51.

¹² Sir Paul Chamberlen, *An Impartial History of the Life and Reign of Queen Anne*, p. 221. Boyer, *Queen Anne*, 4th ed. 1735, p. 281.

¹³ *Nat. Biog.*

¹⁴ Stowe MS. 222, f. 394.

¹⁵ Dated June 20th. Several others among whom were Somers, Sunderland and Orford received similar answers.

¹⁶ October 28th, 1708.

¹⁷ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 57; Boyer, *Queen Anne*, 4th ed. p. 358; Lecky, vol. i. p. 42; Stanhope, vol. ii. p. 98. November 16th, 1708. "Last night the Lord Wharton kissed her Majesty's hand in order to be Lord Lieutenant of Ireland." November 27th. Wharton declared Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Luttrell, vol. vi. p. 373. Also Burnet, vol. v. p. 392, note h: "Lord Wharton professing himself a Whig, but intrinsically void of moral or religious principles, who with mischievous abilities had long been a thorn in the ministers' sides, was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland."

surprising calm. What the real motive of the Queen was when she nominated Wharton to be her Lieutenant in Ireland it is difficult to decide. She always had a dislike for the rough, coarse man, with his shameless, lying and insolent behaviour, that it seems hardly conceivable that she deemed him worthy to represent her in the sister island. That he was a man of power she could not fail to recognize, and perhaps she thought this power would not be as dangerous in Ireland as it might be in England now that he had definitely joined forces with the formidable Whig Junto. The object of this body of men was not difficult to discover. They were obviously determined to gain the government of the country and complete mastery over Anne. The Queen, supported by Harley, was anxious to resist this as long as she could. Harley may not improbably have advised her to send Wharton to Ireland; this would mean at least one Whig out of the way whom they feared might prove troublesome.⁸ Having chosen Joseph Addison to be his Secretary of State,⁹ Wharton left England to take up his new duties in Ireland. He landed at Ringsend on April 21, 1709, and took the oaths¹⁰ as Lord Lieutenant. Almost immediately he opened a session of Parliament with an excellent speech, the keynote of which was his great desire to reconcile the Church of England to the Dissenters in Ireland, so as by union to form a stronger resistance to Popery, which he earnestly wished to see altogether rooted out. "My Lords and Gentlemen, I am obliged and directed to lay before you another consideration of infinite consequence, and that is to put you in mind of the inequality there is in respect of numbers between the Protestants and Papists of this kingdom, and of the melancholy experience you have had of the

⁸ This view is taken by Gibson in his *Memoirs of Queen Anne*, p. 86.

⁹ December 21st, 1708. "The Lord Wharton has made Joseph Addison Ex-Secretary of State for Ireland, Alex. Denton, Esq., M.P. for Buckingham, his private secretary, and Dr. Lambert his first chaplain." Luttrell, vol. vi. p. 386.

¹⁰ Luttrell, vol. vi. p. 436. *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 58.

good nature of this sort of men whenever they have had it in their power to distress or destroy you. These reflections must necessarily lead you to think of two things. The first is seriously to consider whether any new Bills are wanting to enforce or explain those good laws which you have already for preventing the growth of Popery. And in the next place it makes evident the necessity there is of cultivating and preserving a good understanding amongst all the Protestants of this kingdom. What the most proper methods are to compass so desirable and necessary an end yourselves, who have the opportunities of knowing the uneasiness that any of your fellow subjects may lie under, are the fittest to judge. I will only add that the Queen, who is all goodness, never had anything so much at her royal heart as the bringing to pass and perfecting the union of her subjects to Great Britain, and I may venture to say that she looks upon her success in that great undertaking to equal if not to exceed any other of the glories of her reign. Her Majesty now with the same earnestness, and with the same hopes of success, recommends to you a perfect union and friendship among yourselves; and it is therefore to be hoped that every good subject and geod Protestant will endeavour to follow so great an example, and to procure so general a blessing.¹

The Papists soon learnt that they would receive no favour from Wharton, and during the session a Bill to prevent the growth of Popery was passed enacting "that the estates of the Irish Papists should descend to their Protestant heirs."

Of Wharton's life in Ireland during his two years of office little is known. The writer of the "*Memoirs*," which is almost the only source giving anything but the merest facts, says that he made himself eminently popular and beloved. He lived in a manner which pleased the Irish; his Court at Dublin was easily approached, everything was carried on in

¹ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 60.

a free and easy manner; business was finished off in the morning, the evenings were spent in balls, gambling and other diversions to which aldermen, citizens and their wives were invited. The result of this was an address from the Irish House of Lords to Queen Anne when Wharton left England: "We return our most humble thanks to your Majesty for sending His Excellency the Earl of Wharton, a person of so great wisdom and experience to be our chief governor."² All who renounced allegiance to the Papacy had been received by Wharton at his Court. By this and other methods he is said to have done more "in rooting out Popery in three months than the most popular of his predecessors in three years."³ His sympathies were entirely for the Dissenters and in his speech at the end of the session he urged them to unite against the common foe and concluded by declaring it to be the Queen's intention "that Dissenters should not be persecuted or molested in the exercise of their religion."⁴

It was during Wharton's Lieutenancy in Ireland that the crisis of 1710, the utter rout of the Whig party, took place. The trial of Dr. Sacheverell consummated the growing unpopularity of the Whigs and the whole aspect of the political situation was changed. The Whigs had gone one step too far; they had touched a sensitive chord and the nation rose with one accord against the party which they were now convinced was Republican at heart, in religion atheists, or what was still worse—Dissenters. Wharton left Ireland when the trial of Dr. Sacheverell began and was present at the proceedings. He spoke and voted against Sacheverell; he urged impeachment,⁵ maintaining the necessity of resistance in such cases in order to vindicate the honour of the Revolution. He showed none of the modera-

² *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 64.

³ *Ibid.* p. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 68.

⁵ *Parl. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 805 *et seq.* Boyer, *Queen Anne*, 4th ed. 1735, p. 429.

tion displayed by the great Lord Somers, and there is little doubt that the vigour with which he pushed forward the impeachment helped to bring on the defeat of his political allies. So disliked did he make himself thereby that his private house in Dover Street was attacked.

He returned to Ireland on May 7, 1710.⁶ In opening Parliament⁷ he once more urged union among the Protestants and loyalty to the Queen "who so gloriously espoused and vindicated not only the rights of her own people but the liberties of all Europe."⁸

If one can judge from the addresses which Wharton received at the hands of the Irish House, there is little doubt that his administration during the two years was highly appreciated and gave complete satisfaction.⁹ One eminent historian, Mr. Lecky, says he distinguished himself in Ireland by his rapacity and oppression;¹⁰ other views are that his removal from Ireland was a great act of justice to that country, for he had been uniformly obnoxious to both parties¹ and that Somers, and even Sunderland, showed their dissatisfaction at his behaviour.²

The great Whig administration of Queen Anne fell and Tories filled the places which the Whigs had looked upon as so decidedly their right to have and which they were reluctant to leave. Wharton retired to his seat at Winchendon, with the intention of doing all he could to oppose new measures and to prevent what he thought would be the ruin

⁶ Perhaps Harley thought it expedient to have Wharton away while the general elections were approaching. See Somerville, *Queen Anne*.

⁷ May 19th.

⁸ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 76; also Kennet, *Wisdom of Looking Back*, p. 37.

⁹ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 81 *et seq.*

¹⁰ *History of Eighteenth Century*, vol. i. p. 42.

¹ Macpherson, James, *History of 1775*, vol. ii. p. 456.

² Godolphin to Marlborough, June 27th, 1709. *Private Correspondence of the Duchess of Marlborough*, vol. ii. p. 340. Some of Wharton's appointments were said to be scandalous. A story was going round about him that he had recommended one of his companions to a bishop for ecclesiastical preferment as "of a character faultless but for his damnable bad morals" (*Nat. Biog.*).

of his country. He worked hard at the elections and succeeded in obtaining a seat in the new Parliament for a friend, Sir Edmund Denton, as member for Buckinghamshire. Soon after his retirement from Ireland Wharton was severely attacked³ in "The Examiner" and other political papers, chiefly with regard to his oppressive administration as Lord Lieutenant. No writer was so unmerciful in his remarks as Swift; he tried to expose him under the name of "Verres," and his paper in "The Examiner," No. XIV., entitled "The Art of Political Lying," was directed against Wharton. Swift's bitter hatred was not improbably a vent to his disappointed hope, for he had expected promotion when Wharton was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.⁴ In 1714 Wharton made a complaint against "a scandalous anonymous libel" entitled "The Public Spirit of the Whigs";⁵ he tried his utmost to discover who was the author. Swift managed at the time to keep secret his authorship of all these spiteful attacks through the Press. He even tried to urge on a scheme to impeach Wharton, of which he writes, "I have reason to know that it would be acceptable to the Court";⁶ but it fell through. Swift's character of Wharton given at length⁷ is, perhaps, the most bitter satire ever written of any man, but his notoriously bad morals gave a good vantage ground for Swift's attack. On the other hand the author of "The Spectator," in dedicating a volume of his work to Wharton, speaks very favourably of his conduct in public life. But it must not be forgotten that personal and party prejudices influenced to a large extent the

³ *Memoirs of 1715*, pp. 87, 88. Swift writes of one of his own productions (*Journal to Stella*, vol. ii. p. 99), December 8th, 1710: "Here is a damned libellous pamphlet come out against Lord Wharton, giving the character first and then telling some of his actions; the character is very well but the facts indifferent."

⁴ There is a story that Somers recommended Swift to Wharton, but that Wharton refused with the reply, "Oh, my lord, we must not prefer or countenance these fellows; we have not character enough ourselves." Swift, *Works*, vol. i. p. 90.

⁵ *Ibid.* vol. iv. p. 215.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. xv. p. 391.

⁷ *Ibid.* vol. iv. pp. 1-28, and vol. v. pp. 29, 30.

writings of both these men; Swift was a hot Tory and Sir Richard Steele a staunch Whig. Whether in office or out of office, Wharton was of immense use to his party. During the last years of Queen Anne's reign he continued a vigorous opposer to the measures of the Court, and it was this continual and active interest that helped to keep alive every element of discontent and to keep his party prepared for the first opportunity of grasping power. Prince Eugene, when he visited England, was almost royally entertained by Wharton, which won the hearts of the people who thought the Tories were not showing nearly enough attention to the great captain. Wharton was one of the Lords who protested against the orders given to the Duke of Ormond for not fighting;⁹ he seconded Halifax when moving for an address to desire Her Majesty to order the Duke of Ormond to act offensively in concert with the allies. In June, 1713, he moved an address to the Queen, urging her to exercise "her influence" with the Duke of Lorraine so as to effect the expulsion of the Pretender from Nancy; he moved that "Her Majesty might be desired to issue a Proclamation promising a reward to any person who should apprehend the Pretender, dead or alive."¹⁰ After a lengthy debate the motion was carried and Wharton was one of the Lords who carried the address up to the Queen. His speech against the Schism Bill¹ was very nearly the last he was destined to utter and it was one of no small consequence. The object of the Bill² was to revive a clause in the Act of Uniformity, which forbade schoolmasters from giving any instruction before signing a public declaration of uniformity with the Established Church. The Bill now brought

⁹ *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 1136.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 1337; also Boyer, *Political State*, vol. vi. p. 1, and Wyon, vol. ii. p. 456.

¹ June 4th, 1714.

² For Schism Bill see Boyer, *Political State*, vol. vii. p. 479; Paul Chamberlen, p. 498; Boyer, *Queen Anne*, p. 704; *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 1351; and Mahon, *England*, vol. i. p. 81.

forward advocated severe fines for teaching without a licence from a bishop. This cruel and tyrannical measure enraged the Whigs, who had always supported the Dissenters, whom the Tories had done all in their power to oppress. Wharton spoke with bitterness and indignation, aiming most of his thrusts at Bolingbroke, the chief promoter of the Bill, who had himself been educated in his youth by a Dissenting minister and whose subsequent behaviour was known to have been that of a libertine. This gave Wharton ample scope for cruel satire and coarse wit, which he was never inclined to spare in the House. The Bill eventually passed, but not without a protest signed by thirty-three Peers.³ Fortunately for the country, the Bill never came into operation. The date fixed for its introduction was August 1, 1714; on that very day the Queen died and the Government which supported the new King was Whig and not likely to tolerate any such persecution of the Dissenters. The Act was repealed.

During Anne's last illness Wharton, with many other Whig Lords belonging to the Privy Council, made a point of asserting their right to attend at the Council Board. Seeing that the Queen's death was not far off, Wharton was one of the Whigs who helped to ensure the peaceable accession of George I. to the throne. His name was not on the list of Regents, possibly owing to the extreme dislike the Queen showed for him, but when George I. became King he was appointed Lord Privy Seal,⁴ and on February 15, 1715, he was created Marquis of Wharton and Malmesbury in England, Baron of Trim, Earl of Rathfarmum and Marquis of Catherlogh in Ireland, and Lord Lieutenant of the County of Westmorland.⁵ For two short months only was he to

³ Rogers, vol. i. p. 221. The Bill was carried by 77 to 72. It was supported by Bolingbroke, Anglesey, North and Grey, and opposed by Cowper, Wharton, Halifax, Townshend and Nottingham.

⁴ Mahon, vol. i. p. 103.

⁵ *Memoirs of 1715*, p. 105; Ranke, vol. v. p. 363; Boyer, *Political State*, vol. ix. p. 11.

enjoy these honours, nor was he to witness the Whig ascendancy which, by his unceasing labours for his party, he had so largely helped to advance. He died at his house in Dover Street on April 12, 1715, and was buried quietly at Winchendon.

That his death meant a severe loss to his party there can be no doubt. His passion for pure Whig principles,⁶ his zeal for the Protestant interest and for the Protestant succession, his great natural abilities and fund of good sense were invaluable at the time in which he lived. Though far from being wholly disinterested in his partisanship, he was nevertheless at heart a true Whig and his loyalty was sincere.⁷ Perhaps his skill as a party organiser proved to be the quality which his colleagues of the Junto found most indispensable; in this direction it would have been hard to find his equal.⁸ His immoralities, his profaneness and his open contempt for religion are incontestable. The following poem, written in 1712,⁹ gives some idea of the hatred and disgust which his behaviour excited:—

Industrious, unfatigued in Faction's Cause,
Sworn Enemy to God, his Church and Laws :
He doats on Mischief for dear Mischief's sake ;
Joins contradictions in his wondrous make ;
A flattering Bully and a stingy Rake.
Joins depth of Cunning with Excess of Rage,
Lewdness of youth with Impotence of Age.
Descending, though of Race illustrious born,
To such vile actions as a slave wou'd scorn.
A Vice-y once, by unpropitious Fate,
The Ruler and the Robber of the State.

⁶ See Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 298.

⁷ Cunningham, in his *Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen* (1835), says: "His political life, if not brilliant, had the merit of consistency, and he freely sacrificed both his time and money to the objects of the Liberal party. There was about him a rugged force of character which enabled him to surmount many difficulties which to minds of less energy and endurance would have often proved insurmountable."

⁸ Lecky, vol. i. p. 209. The Whigs lost Wharton, "the most skilful and unscrupulous of their party managers," talking of his death.

⁹ "The character of a certain Whigg," 1712. *Brit. Mus. Cat.* 11,630, h.

His dignity and Honour, he secures
By Oaths, Profaneness, Ribaldry and Whores.
Kisses the man, whom just before he bit,
Takes Lies for Jests, and Perjury for Wit,
To great and small alike extends his Frands,
Plund'ring the Crown and bilking Rooks and Bauds.
His mind still working, mad, of Peace bereft,
And Malice eating what the P—x has left.
A monster, whom no Vice can bigger swell,
Abhor'd by Heaven and long since due to Hell.

A Tory probably being the author of these bitter lines warns us that they cannot be taken too severely, for party antagonism was capable of producing any quantity of such invective.

Swift, who hated Wharton as an “atheist grafted on a Dissenter,” was, nevertheless, probably somewhat correct when he summed up Wharton’s career as “wholly occupied by vice and politics.” His untiring energy was used in the cause of both.

The nicknames of “Honest Tom” and “Let’em-be-damned Wharton” put in a nutshell his character as exhibited in his conduct to others. “Honest” he was, to those with whom he sympathised; anxious to do all he could to help them and promote their interests. On the other hand, anyone who held views contrary to his own, anyone who ventured to oppose him, he dismissed with the vulgarest invective. He was the boldest of men and the most unscrupulous. A few virtues and, above all, unquestionable talents were sufficient to make his party tolerate his vulgar and abandoned character which, to his friends, proved so often distasteful and which gave to his two wives such a wretched married life. There was some cause for Queen Anne’s personal dislike for Wharton and for her anxiety to keep him at a distance. She realized that he was a dangerous man to have in office, and the fact that she did realize this is but another instance of the soundness of her judgment.

EDWARD RUSSELL.

IN following the career of Edward Russell we are to a great extent tracing the naval history of England during the reigns of William III. and Anne. There was but one aim of any real importance to naval and military politicians alike—resistance to France. England had good cause for her anxiety. The monarchs of England, and William III. most of all, recognised the danger which lay in that direction, and the keynote of the foreign policy during the reigns of William III. and Anne may be summed up in that one sentence—resistance to France. It was not, however, only the Sovereigns of England who realized the danger which Louis' ambition might be to their country, the nation was at one with its ruler in this common dread.

The fact that Russell's career exemplified the national antipathy to France may largely account for his popularity; for there was little, if anything, in his character that was commendable. His conduct, his secret intrigues, his falsities, his insolent pride were little known to the nation, or, at any rate, if known were concealed by his public services which were universally notorious. Russell was a man of considerable capacity for war and administration, but without a spark of genius. He was no statesman, no orator: he had no power as a politician; he made no mark in the House. There was a bluntness and coarseness about his behaviour which was distasteful and made him disliked by Anne and even by William, who nevertheless owed much to him as one of the supporters of the Revolution. Moreover, he was ambitious to an insatiable degree. His greed for high



EDWARD RUSSELL.

office, for distinction of any kind and for recognition could never be satisfied. His one object always seemed to be his own advantage.¹ Yet he was a member of the Junto, and highly considered by his party. He had at least, if none other, the merit of loyalty to his party ; he was a staunch Whig throughout his life, and next to his own interests those of his party were very dear to him. He had a strong party spirit, and never for a moment, not even when he turned Jacobite, did he think of proving false to the Whigs. His discontent was not only for his own disappointed pride ; if the Whigs did not get the full recognition they deserved he grumbled, and his spirit of revenge was aroused. It must be remembered that in aspiring to high places in the State, Russell was no great exception. Nearly all the leading men on both sides can be accused of self-seeking. It was Russell's zeal for his party which made him useful to the Junto ; it was his public services in the struggle against France and, above all, the check he gave to her power at the battle of La Hogue, which made him popular to the nation : But this is to anticipate.

Edward Russell was born in 1653.² He was a younger brother of William Russell, first Duke of Bedford. Being destined at an early age for the sea, his education was such as would fit him for this career. He entered the navy as a volunteer when quite young,³ and when nineteen years old he was appointed lieutenant of the "Advice." He attracted the attention of the Duke of York, who was High Admiral, and became one of the Gentlemen of his Bedchamber. He took part in the second Dutch war, and after the battle of Southwold Bay he was promoted to be captain of the "Phœnix." In the following year—the year which saw the downfall of the great Cabal ministry—Russell was away as commander of the "Swallow," attached to the fleet under

¹ Macpherson.

² *National Biography.* Coxe, in *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, says 1652.

³ David Hannay, *Short History of the Royal Navy*, 1217-1688, p. 456.

Prince Rupert. In 1676 he went with the squadron to the Mediterranean under Sir John Narbrough, and he stayed there with Herbert, Earl of Torrington, till 1682, when he quitted the navy, and seems not to have joined it again until after the Revolution.⁴ The execution of his cousin⁵ William, Lord Russell, may probably have been the cause of his discontent. The deaths of Russell and Sydney were most unjustifiable, and a severe blow to the whole Whig faction. A plot, it is true, had been brewing, a plot to murder the King at the Rye House on his way from Newmarket to London.⁶ The whole Whig party were suspected of having been privy to it, but it was really the scheme of an old Cromwellian soldier, Rumbold, and a few desperate followers whom he had urged to support him. The plot was discovered, and the King, eager to strike a blow at the Whigs, had Russell and Sydney tried at the same time as the conspirators, as if they had been in close league with them. The evidence against them was absurdly trivial, and their execution infuriated the Whigs. Sydney and Russell were looked upon as martyrs to the Whig cause. For the next six years Russell gave himself up to political life. Thoroughly disgusted with the government and at enmity with James and his household, partly on public and partly on private grounds, and above all anxious to avenge the death of his near kinsman, he threw all his energy into the cause of the Prince of Orange. In May, 1688, while there was still grave doubt as to whether the Declaration would or would not be read in the churches, Russell went over to the Hague⁷ and put his scheme before William of Orange. Now, he said, was the time for the Prince to land in England with a strong force and to summon the people to arms; even the Tories, or, at all events, a very large sec-

⁴ Charnock, *Biographia Navalis*, 1794, vol. i. p. 355.

⁵ Hannay, p. 456. Coxe, *ut supra*, pt. iii. p. 390, says William was Edward's brother.

⁶ Hence called the Rye House Plot.

⁷ Burnet, *Own Times*, vol. iii. p. 240.

tion of them, were alarmed and affronted by the King's treatment of the Church. They dreaded the peril which it was in, and they were asking themselves whether resistance to such a prince as James could properly be called rebellion. The prosecution of the bishops,⁸ and later the birth of the Prince of Wales, produced a very great change in the feelings of many Tories. The Whigs saw the advantage which this change in the minds of their opponents gave to their cause. William of Orange had been watching the turn of events in England; he saw the importance of the crisis. But before he would venture to land in England, he desired some assurance of support, some few signatures of statesmen who were loyal to his cause.⁹ With this answer Russell hastened back to London. He, together with Henry Sydney, brother of Algernon Sydney, who had been executed, and who, like Russell, was embittered against the household of James and anxious to avenge his brother's death, at once began to sound the chiefs of both parties. Secret meetings were held and the outcome was an invitation sent to William from the seven chiefs of the conspiracy: Shrewsbury, Devonshire, Danby (minister of Charles II.), the Tory Lumley, Compton (Bishop of London), Russell and Sydney.¹⁰

About the middle of August Shrewsbury and Russell crossed over to the Hague; Shrewsbury with £12,000¹ to help William with his enterprise. The facts of William's invasion of England, of his landing at Torbay, of his march on London and of the flight of James are too well known to call for narration. Russell was with the Prince in a private capacity on his voyage to England and on his march to London.

On the accession of William to the throne of England, Russell once more resumed his naval career. In 1689 he

⁸ For the prosecution of the Bishops see *supra*, p. 8 *et seq.*

⁹ Burnet, vol. iii. pp. 241, 277.

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 411. Ranke, vol. iv. p. 399.

¹ Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 443. Raised by a mortgage on his estates.

was appointed Treasurer of the Navy² and in July he was made Admiral of the Blue Squadron in the fleet under Lord Torrington. A few months later he was ordered³ to convey the Queen of Spain from Holland to the Groyne. In 1690 he was appointed Admiral of the Fleet and William made him one of the "Council of the Nine,"⁴ who were to act as advisers to Mary in his absence. The nine were four Whigs: Devonshire, Dorset, Monmouth and Russell; and five Tories: Caermarthen, Pembroke, Nottingham, Marlborough and Lowther.

Jealousy of Torrington, who held the command of the fleet, which Russell thought belonged to himself by right for his political services, urged him to do all he could to oust Torrington from his post. In spite of being in command of the Blue Squadron Russell spent many months in London intriguing against him. Torrington was ordered to give battle to Tourville, but refused to do so because his fleet was the smaller and poorer of the two. Probably owing to advice given by Russell, Torrington was commanded to fight and the disastrous defeat at Beachy Head was the result.⁵ Torrington was dismissed and Russell was appointed to succeed him. During the summer of 1691 he commanded the fleet without having an opportunity of bringing the French to action.

In March of the following year William went abroad to carry on the continental war. As hitherto, his absence meant an increase of danger from France. An invasion of England had long been in the minds of the enemy, for James, the titular King, had urged Louis to make an attack, which, partly by the treachery of his adherents, he had been made to believe would be almost certain of success. William's absence from

² April 4th.

³ Nov. 24th, 1689. Josiah Burchett, *Memoirs of Transactions at Sea*, 1688-1697, pp. 34, 35. Also Ledgard, *Naval History*, book iv. p. 629.

⁴ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 597. Tindal, *Continuation of Rapin*, vol. i. p. 139.

⁵ Macaulay, vol. iii. p. 608.

England, and more especially the death of Louvois, the French War Minister, in 1691, who had always made a strong stand against any such rash enterprise, furthered the scheme and a plan for an invasion of England was actually devised. An army was secretly gathered together on the coast of Normandy; two fleets were assembled at Brest and at Toulon, together numbering eighty ships of the line, under the command of Tourville and d'Estrées. James, wholly deceived by Russell and others, believed, and made Louis believe, that the English fleet was much weaker, and was moreover in an undisciplined and disordered state. They were unconscious of the preparations being made by England, by the Queen of England, and by William in Holland, until they witnessed a combined fleet of Dutch and English vessels, ninety in all,⁷ in the Channel under the command of Russell. Tourville's squadron, numbering forty-five ships, made an appearance. He was under a fatal misapprehension, for it was supposed, weak as it was, that his fleet was quite strong enough for all necessary purposes; it could beat the Dutch fleet, and the English fleet under Russell was not likely to fight. Relying on this false hope, Louis had commanded his admiral to fight whatever the force of the enemy might be.⁸ Meanwhile James had issued a declaration⁹ which helped very much to damage his own position. In this injudicious document he announced to his subjects what he intended to do when he should once more be in their midst. A long list of those who were to receive no mercy showed with what a spirit of revenge his doings were to be actuated. Even the

⁷ There seems some difference of opinion about the number of ships in the allied fleet. See *Hist. MSS. Com.* 14th Report, App. pt. 6. "Actual strength of fleet which fought the French at La Hogue, on 15th May, Russell's line of battle, gives a total of 64 ships of the line, but only 57 of these appear to have been available, for he writes saying, 'The Dutch that are now with me are 22 in number, which is all we expect in any time, so that with those of our own we make up 79 sail,' instead of the 99 which has commonly been represented by historians as the combined strength of the allied fleet."

⁸ See Sue, *Histoire de la Marine Française*, vol. v. pp. 17-48.

⁹ Ralph, p. 350. *Somers's Tracts*, vol. x. p. 211.

Jacobites were amazed and forced to own that it was absurd, and Russell was not only amazed but angered and ashamed of the Prince whom he had been helping to restore. His whole position suddenly changed. He realized that it was futile trying to punish William, and he had wished to punish William for what he thought ungrateful neglect of his party,¹⁰ by bringing back a King who would be even more harsh and ungrateful. He saw the folly of trying to serve two masters and, ever a true Whig at heart and a devoted lover of his profession, he no longer hesitated fighting the hostile fleet. He confessed to Lloyd¹ that he had changed his view. "I wish," he said, "to serve King James. The thing might be done, if it were not his own fault. But he takes the wrong way with us. Let him forget all the past; let him grant a general pardon, and then I will see what I can do for him." On Lloyd suggesting that Russell would miss the honours which James would give him as a reward for his help, Russell replied, "I do not wish to hear anything on that subject. My solicitude is for the public. And do not think that I will let the French triumph over us in our sea. Understand this, that if I meet them I fight them, ay, though His Majesty himself should be on board."

Then followed the Battle of La Hogue,² a battle so full of significance to England and to France. Russell urged on his men so that when Tourville arrived there was no sign of the disaffection and half-heartedness in the English fleet upon which James and Louis had counted. Tourville was overpowered by numbers,³ the fleet fled and was utterly

¹⁰ Ranke, vol. v. p. 42.

¹ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 232.

² For the battle of La Hogue, see Burton, *History of King William and Queen Mary*, pp. 131-133; Ranke, vol. v. p. 49; Tindal, Cont. of Rapin, vol. i. p. 201 *et seq.*

³ Speaking of the battle, Russell writes (May 23rd): "The enemy's ships did not exceed 50 ships of war, of which number 18 of them had 3 decks and but two so small as 56 guns. Tho' their number was inferior to ours yet I can positively affirm that the ships of their Majesties which beat them did not exceed 40, for the weather being so thick and quite calm, the Dutch, who led the van, could not come in to fight and the Blue, who were in the rear, could not come up, except in the night about 8 o'clock." *Hist. MSS. Com.* 14th Report, App. pt. 6, vol. vii.

destroyed. Tourville, with twelve of the largest vessels, took refuge in the Bay of La Hogue. Russell ordered an attack, and under the command of Admiral Rooke two attacks were made; the enemy were powerless, their ships were taken and burnt.⁴ The significance of this battle was threefold. It was a serious check to the power of France; it gave the command of the seas to England: it declared that, in spite of faction and party strife at home, the navy was the "wall and fence of the kingdom," and that, whether Jacobites or no, the admirals and captains of the navy were not unpatriotic enough to allow the French to "triumph over us in our seas" without striking a blow; and, thirdly, it once and for all crushed the hopes of the exiled King and proved that a Restoration would never be tolerated.⁵ Russell's share in the victory can hardly be called a noble one.⁶ It was more a matter of chance than of will. He had tried to play a double game.⁷ He had tried to remain on good terms with both William and James; by underhand dealings he had been preparing to act traitor to William, and probably because of this he had not brought the French to action in the preceding year in spite of considerable superiority of force. Of the two admirals, Tourville was probably the more able. Russell's position as admiral had not been so much a reward of ability as of intrigue. Tourville had won his position by slow degrees and by hard fighting; he was a good seaman and, what Russell could never be called, he was an honest man.

Notwithstanding the advantage the English had had over her foe, the victory was looked upon as a cause for great rejoicing. But in order really to understand the nature of this public joy we must remember that it was the first

⁴ Luttrell, vol. ii. p. 464.

⁵ Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 61.

⁶ Hallam says Russell, though compelled to win the battle of La Hogue against his will, took care to render his splendid victory as little advantageous as possible. *Constit. History*, vol. iii. p. 126.

⁷ Dalrymple, vol. i. p. 497.

great check given to Louis' power and the first great victory that England had gained over France since the long past fight at Agincourt.

The Commons, on opening the session, had passed a unanimous vote of thanks to Russell for his conduct at the Battle of La Hogue,⁸ and at the time he had been eminently popular as the victor of the French, a popularity which he so little deserved. But as soon as the first flush of victory had subsided, it came to be thought that more might have been made of the victory if Russell had followed it up. An enquiry took place; the doings of Russell and the other admirals were severely scrutinized. But the Commons chose to support one who was secretly a traitor, possibly because the real nature of his intrigues was unknown to them and partly, too, because he bore the name of Whig. They resolved that he had behaved with "courage, fidelity and conduct."⁹ The popular feeling had nevertheless turned against Russell for the moment, and his dismissal from the command of the fleet took place in the spring of 1693. At the same time he resigned the Treasurership of the Navy, which office he had held ever since 1689. He retired into the country and built himself a house at Everton.¹⁰

The summer of 1693 proved a disastrous one for the fleet and a cry was raised for the recall of Russell, who alone seemed capable of managing the naval operations with success. In November he was reinstated as admiral and in addition was made First Lord of the Admiralty.¹¹

The naval operations of the next few years show the importance attached to the mastery of the Mediterranean, firstly as a means of protecting British trade and secondly as a means of holding France in check. Further, they are a proof that the fleet was beginning to be recognized as a power able to arrest and prevent territorial aggression.²

⁸ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 303.

⁹ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 185.

¹⁰ *Memoirs relating to Lord Torrington*, p. 66.

¹¹ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 470.

² Colomb, *Naval Warfare*, pp. 271-272.

William's attention was particularly directed to the fleet in the Mediterranean under the command of Russell. If we read the correspondence between Shrewsbury and Russell we gather some idea of the hardships which fell to the lot of the admiral³ and also of the King's difficulties in dealing with such a man.

The Battle of La Hogue had severely repulsed but not crushed the French power. The object of the French Court seemed now to consist in conquering or intimidating the Spaniards and the princes of Italy and thereupon to form an alliance which would strengthen her position as opposed to England. It planned the design of uniting the fleets of Brest and Toulon and with this combined force to threaten the coasts of Spain and Italy. William dreaded the junction of the two fleets and determined to do all he could to prevent it. He ordered an attack on Brest, but his plan received little encouragement from the Cabinet and vigorous opposition from Russell. This may account for the failure of the expedition; the preparations for the attack were so half-hearted and so inadequate, and carried out in such a leisurely way that a failure was anticipated,⁴ and took place. The dilatoriness of the Admiralty and the inability of the Treasury to furnish the requisite supplies disgusted Russell; this, together with ill-health and a feeling that William did not fully appreciate his services, will explain the peevish and complaining character of his letters to Shrewsbury at this time. "With probable hopes of success I would venture a great deal. . . . I suppose I shall be blamed for not fighting the French, whether they will or no. . . . I long to be rid of this troublesome affair. I have neither head, body nor temper to undergo all I do."⁵

³ Russell writes: "The fighting part is by much the least trouble that an admiral of the English fleet meets with." *Hist. MSS. Com.* 14th Report, App. pt. 6, vol. ix.

⁴ Russell to Shrewsbury, May 3rd, 1694.

⁵ *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pt. ii. p. 199.

The failure of the expedition against Brest made William doubly anxious to oppose the designs of France in the Mediterranean and he ordered Russell to winter with the fleet at Cadiz.⁶ Shrewsbury thereupon writes to Russell, "The doctrine you used to preach to me that public good ought to be considered before private ease will now come to your share to practise in a more tedious and troublesome manner than you could foresee," and Russell, though he complained bitterly of the orders he had received from the King, wrote to Shrewsbury that he would obey them, though contrary to his judgment and inclination.⁷ The winter at Cadiz brought forth continual complaints from Russell, complaints that his expenses exceeded his stipend, that his ships were in a rotten condition, that the supplies were insufficient. "I am Admiral, Commander of the Navy, victualler, storekeeper, in short, everything but a happy man." The winter was employed in preparing his fleet for an attack as soon as the spring should make action possible.⁸ But the summer of 1695 was unable to boast of any really useful naval operations, partly owing to the fact that Russell found the French much better prepared for defence than he had expected and partly owing to considerable damage being done to his ships by a storm. In the spring Russell had received the Commission of General, which put him into a much more happy state of mind. In February he wrote, "Order the fleet and me to do as you please, I will cheerfully obey. . . . I may say without vanity no man ever took more pains than I have done, and in some measure I have been successful in making the fleet as much as possible interrupt the French trade."⁹ But when, though undoubtedly master of the Mediterranean,¹⁰ he failed

⁶ *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pt. ii. pp. 200, 202.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 205.

⁸ "The wintering of the fleet at Cadiz in 1694, a measure determined on by William's energetic mind, against the advice of his ministers and in spite of the fretful insolence of the admiral, gave us so decided a pre-eminence both in the Atlantic and Mediterranean seas." Hallam, vol. iii. p. 136.

⁹ *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pt. ii. p. 224.

¹⁰ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 600.

to achieve anything decisive during the summer, and William desired him to remain a second winter at Cadiz, Russell declined to do so.¹ Towards the end of 1695 he returned to England exhausted, in ill-health and disgusted by what he thought a very cold reception from William, who could not well ignore his continual complaints and want of respect.

A crisis was, however, at hand. The Assassination Plot was rife and the French were preparing forces by land and sea to attempt a second descent on England. Russell was called into action again, and the mere fact that it was always he that was needed in the hour of danger shows that his ability as a commander was recognized. His tone is cheerful: "You may depend upon my executing His Majesty's pleasure, and I hope to be of strength sufficient to oppose with success any design that may be attempted on England."²

He was able to check the attempt on the part of France to attack our island, and he left Sir Cloudsley Shovel to cruise about the coast of France in order to prevent any ships from coming out of the harbours. William thereupon reluctantly gave up his idea of destroying the French armaments in their harbours and granted Russell leave to withdraw from his temporary command and return to England. He did so, and from that date he retired from active service and devoted his energies to the management of the Admiralty and the direction of public affairs. He remained at the Admiralty till 1699.

During his time in command Russell's achievements fell far short of that which had been hoped from him; but he had at least checked the aggression of France. Louis, rather than James, was the enemy against which William and Mary had to defend their crown, and William, from necessity as well as from desire, took up the rôle of champion of

¹ *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pt. ii. p. 226.

² February 25th, 1696. *Ibid.* pt. ii. p. 247.

Protestantism and of the liberties of Europe against French ascendancy, against Popery and arbitrary power. Though often omitting to do what he might have done, Russell did help William in this stand against his formidable foe.

The Battle of La Hogue can hardly be called great, but it was highly significant. It was scarcely very decisive, yet it proved a turning point in naval history. Russell had shown to the nations of Europe the inferiority of the French naval power as compared to our own. Hitherto France had been the superior naval power. Colbert had aimed at, and almost reached, the highest naval efficiency.³ La Hogue is the high watermark of this ascendancy. Henceforward, in the long maritime struggle between the two countries, England was to be the first power. The Battle of Beachy Head, though a defeat for England, may be regarded as the opening of that long rivalry which ended at Trafalgar. Russell was neither a great man nor a great admiral, but his name will always be closely connected with La Hogue, the battle which stands out as a landmark in the course of British naval history.

In 1697 William appointed Russell one of the Lords Justices during his absence and at the same time raised him to the peerage as Baron of Shingey, Viscount Barfleur and Earl of Orford.⁴

The year before a search had been made for those who had taken part in the Jacobite plots. Sir John Fenwick was captured and thought to be a fitting victim. In his confession he openly accused Shrewsbury and Russell⁵ of treason and exposed Marlborough and Godolphin. It had little effect upon the King except astonishment at "the fellow's effrontery."⁶ Russell flew into a towering rage and vowed revenge on the base informant. Shrewsbury, the

³ See Seeley, *British Policy*, vol. ii.

⁴ Campbell, *Naval History*. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 356.

⁵ Ranke, vol. v. p. 127. *Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 263.

⁶ William to Shrewsbury, September 10th, 1696.

least guilty of them all, was deeply grieved, confessed the whole nature of his offence to the King and declared his intention of resigning the seals. When Parliament came to discuss how to deal with Fenwick's confession, Russell rose and with his usual courage demanded that justice should be shown to Shrewsbury and himself. "If we are innocent, clear us; if we are guilty, punish us as we deserve. I put myself on you as on my country and am ready to stand or fall by your verdict."⁷ Fenwick was brought forth, but on his refusal to divulge to the House what he said were secrets only for the King's ear, his information was pronounced to be false and he was attainted of high treason. The following year he was executed and died bravely, loyal to King James.⁸

In 1699 Russell, as already mentioned, resigned all his employments. A vigorous attack had been directed against him when enquiring into the conduct of the navy. Orford had offended many by his grasping the two lucrative posts of First Lord of the Admiralty and Treasurer of the Navy.⁹ He was induced to give up the inferior but more lucrative one of the two. This roused his uncontrollable temper and he began a heated dispute with Sir George Rooke, a Tory admiral, who had also a seat on the Board. Orford insisted on the right of nominating a new Board, by which means he could exclude his rival; and threatened to resign if he could not have his way. Somers was much harassed by his unaccommodating spirit. He wrote to Shrewsbury.¹⁰ "My Lord Orford's mortifications this session in both Houses are got pretty well over. I hope he will be

⁷ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 738.

⁸ See *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pt. iii., for an insight into the feelings of Shrewsbury, Russell and the others concerning Fenwick's accusation. For the trial see Howell, *State Trials*, vol. xiii. p. 538.

⁹ "Edward Russell united in his own person two offices which ought never to be held by one man: First Lord of the Admiralty and Treasurer of the Navy. He seems to have been the most grasping, avaricious and intractable of the Ministers." Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 279.

¹⁰ March 30th to April 9th, 1699. *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pt. iii. p. 583.

of opinion to part with his Treasury place and to keep in the Admiralty; otherwise I think he will quite lessen his character if he should aim at parting with neither or both."

The King, too, was displaying a want of accommodation; he was gradually losing popularity by insisting on the maintenance of a large standing army, and the Whigs were losing favour with him by not supporting him in this measure as much as he expected them to do. The new Parliament in 1698 showed that a Tory reaction had set in. In 1699 great changes took place in the ministry. Orford was persuaded, much against his will, to resign the Treasurership and to remain at the Admiralty.¹¹ Vernon, in one of his letters, realized what a difficult temper Lord Orford had to deal with when he wrote, "I should think the grand affair would be to keep my Lord Orford in temper. Those who have persuaded him to quit the Treasurership and stick to the Admiralty have consulted his honour more than his inclinations, which perhaps would still draw him aside."

But when Orford realized that he was not to have autocratic power, he took offence and resigned his office. He retired into the country feeling much slighted and heartily indignant with the King.¹

The new government took the first opportunity of attacking the Whig leaders. Orford shared the impeachment which the great Lord Somers had to undergo, the main charge against them both being their share in the Partition Treaties and their knowledge of and participation in the piratical exploits of Captain Kidd.² They had both subscribed to

¹¹ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 184.

¹ *Ibid.* p. 185. Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 105. Vernon writes (*Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 280): "I understand it was in this manner. He told the King he had heard that choice was made of a set of men to be Commissioners of the Admiralty which he was very well satisfied with and the rather since he might now retire as being no longer useful, etc., etc. Note.—Russell had been vehemently attacked in Parliament, but it is evident that the cause of his going out was that Sir G. Rooke had a seat at the Admiralty notwithstanding his efforts to exclude him."

² Burnet, vol. iv. p. 488 *et seq.* Tindal, vol. i. p. 459 *et seq.* Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 113.

Captain Kidd's original expedition, the object of which had been to destroy piracy in the Indian Sea, but they had not reckoned on Kidd himself turning pirate. Orford was further charged with taking grants from the King and with mismanaging the fleet.³ In his answer he denied any share in the Partition Treaty, and in the matter of Captain Kidd he maintained he had acted "legally, with good intentions to the public and to his own loss."⁴ While impeaching the Whig Lords the Commons felt quite sure that the Whig majority of the Upper House would at once acquit their victims, for it was obviously a question merely of party feeling and animosity. The trial⁵ took place, with the expected result.

In the new reign Orford had little chance of concerning himself in public business. The direction of all naval affairs was given by Queen Anne to her husband, Prince George of Denmark, who was wholly unsuited to be Lord High Admiral, the post which he occupied till his death. "I have tried him drunk," said the shrewd Charles II., "and I have tried him sober, and there is nothing in him."⁶ A fond and affectionate husband he may have been, but manifestly incompetent. To give him the supreme command of all her forces by land and sea, with the title of "Generalissimo,"⁷ was a rash move on the part of the Queen, but it might have been more disastrous if his incapacity had not necessitated the nomination of a Council to help him. This Council comprised competent men, such as Sir George Rooke, and in reality administered the navy. Russell probably witnessed with whole-hearted disgust the appointment of his rival to this Council which was to have such power in the direction of naval affairs. There is little to indicate what he did during these years of the Prince's administration. The incompetence of the Prince and his reckless expenditure often made the ministers, especially the Whigs,

³ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 505.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 506.

⁵ Vernon, vol. iii. p. 149.

⁶ Oman, p. 461.

⁷ Wyon, vol. i. p. 62.

ardently wish to have Russell back at the head of the Admiralty.⁸ This fact probably rendered Russell particularly disliked by the Queen; not only was he a Whig, but he was a nobleman whose professional ability and popularity made him the rival, and often the censor, of her husband in the management of the Admiralty.⁹

The years 1706 and 1707 saw an inclination of the government to favour the Whigs. Marlborough's scheme of a composite ministry, composed of the leading men of both parties, came into existence for a short time. It was during the session of this Parliament¹⁰ that the maladministration of the navy was discussed at length, much to the displeasure of the Queen, for this implied an attack on Prince George. Somers spoke of what seemed the glaring faults in the administration of the navy and the appointment of a new Council was urged.¹¹ It soon became apparent that pure patriotism was not the only motive on the part of the Whigs when they censured the conduct of the Admiralty. They were aiming at high posts, and the appointment of Somers as President of the Council was pressed upon the Queen. She held out firmly against it, for she felt that it would displease her Consort, who regarded Somers as the chief instigator of the recent attacks upon naval measures. Finally, as a last resource, the Whigs threatened to bring a direct attack by name against Prince George for his mismanagement of affairs at the Admiralty. This decided Anne; anything rather than see her husband discredited during his last days of life. On October 20 she gave way and admitted Somers. On the 28th the Prince, who had been for some time slowly sinking, died; and his death cleared up many diffi-

⁸ Duke of Marlborough to Duchess (*Private Correspondence*, p. 179), June 13th: "As to 104 (Admiralty), since everybody desires 15 (Orford) should be at the head, I wish him there with all my heart, but I fear nobody has power to get it done."

⁹ Coxe, *ut supra*, vol. ii. p. 86.

¹⁰ It began on October 23rd, 1707.

¹¹ For the design on the part of the Whigs to get Orford at the head of the fleet again, see Burnet, vol. v. p. 343.

culties in public affairs. The stricken Queen felt unable to resist; the administration was completed upon a Whig basis and her husband's successor at the Admiralty was Orford, the very man whom she least wanted to see in his place. Only for one year, however, was he to enjoy the much coveted post. The fall of the Whigs in the following year² produced an entirely Tory ministry, and Russell once more retired from public life.

Much as the war abroad had occupied the attention of ministers during the first years of Queen Anne's reign, there were home affairs which were almost, if not quite, as absorbing. The Union with Scotland had been negotiated and finally completed in 1707. In 1706 Russell had been one of the Commissioners³ to discuss and settle it. Though at one with his party, and with his colleagues of the Junto in particular, in urging the Union, Russell does not seem to have taken much active part in the debates. He had little, if any, power as a speaker and consequently his voice was seldom heard either in the House or in Committee.

"Since the Queen's accession to the throne he hath been little taken notice of, nor is he pitied by people of his own profession; he hath purchased a vast estate and knows very well how to improve it."⁴ In this manner writes Mr. Macky, a contemporary of Russell, and this, judging from the lack of information concerning him during Queen Anne's reign, must be the accepted conclusion. Little is heard of him again till the accession of George I.

After the death of Queen Anne, Russell was appointed to be one of the Lords Justices to manage affairs till the arrival of the new Sovereign. On King George's arrival in England a new ministry was selected and all the high offices given to Whigs. The Admiralty was put into Commission under the Earl of Orford, and the Treasury under Lord

² Burnet, vol. vi. p. 13.

³ *Parl. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 535.

⁴ See *Memoirs of the Secret Services of John Macky, etc.*, p. 76 *et seq.*

Halifax; Lord Sunderland obtained the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, Lord Wharton the Privy Seal. Somers alone of the Junto, as we have already seen, had no post in the new government, having retired altogether from public life owing to failing health. Orford was, in addition, appointed Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire. In 1717 he finally resigned all his employments and retired altogether from public life. He lived on till 1727, the last survivor of the great Whig Junto. One by one his colleagues passed away, until he died on November 26, 1727,⁵ at his house in Covent Garden. Of his wife there is little mention. She was the Lady Mary, third daughter of William Russell, Duke of Bedford. They had no issue, so the title of Earl of Orford became extinct in the house of Russell.

It remains only to quote a part of a poem written to the memory of Edward Russell. By whom it was penned is not known, but judging from its highly eulogistic character throughout, one can fairly safely conclude that it was the work of a Whig, and of one who saw not the obvious failings of Lord Orford, or, if aware of them, refused to expose him after death.

. . . Thy virtues, Orford, which shall ever shine
 Till the Muse dies ; while harmony divine
 Subsists in song—
 To speak whose actions might demand a tongue
 Like those which Rome or Greece's Heroes sung,
 Worthy of Virgil's never dying lines,
 Where, pompous verse, in nervous numbers shines,
 Or Pindar's strong, inimitable strains.

.
 In youth, in manhood, in declining age,
 Belov'd, admir'd, rever'd. Surpass'd by none
 In old or modern days ; by one alone
 Perhaps compeered.

⁵ *Nat. Biog.* Campbell, *Naval Hist.* p. 169. Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. vi. p 361.

In him Colligny's firm religion shone,
Colligny, by a treacherous queen undone.
Blake's prowess and felicity of days,
He amply shared, with virtues worthy praise,
Which all de Ruyter's Pourtrait strong display
In the full light of Glory's endless day,
Renowned for conduct and his faithful zeal,
To serve his country and the Commonweal.

CHARLES MONTAGU.

OF the five men who together formed the Junto, and whose lives and characters we are shortly considering here, Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, was perhaps the one who had the most genius and the most brilliance of intellect. Besides possessing striking abilities as a statesman, an eloquence which was both convincing and elegant, he had sound judgment and a clear knowledge of finance. He was a great master of detail and perhaps the first Finance Minister of note that England ever had. But this was not all. He was also a man of letters of no mean standing, according to the standard of the time; and besides being an ardent and liberal encourager of literature, he was himself an author. He can hardly be said to have had a gift of poetic genius; this we shall see later when we come to consider his poetry, but that he was a lover of the Muses there is little doubt, and he stands out as one of the great patrons of poetry in the Augustan age. Added to all these gifts, he had social qualities which largely accounted for his popularity; his manners were captivating,¹ he was courteous, obliging and good-natured. With King William, after the great Lord Somers, Montagu certainly came next in favour.

Having gained some slight idea of the character of the man, nothing will more truly display his many-sided talents than to follow him briefly through his brilliant career. Born on April 16, 1661,² at Horton, in Northamptonshire,

¹ Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*.

² *Modern British Biography*, vol. i. p. 531. Weld, *History of Royal Society*, vol. i. p. 331. Chester, *Westminster Abbey Register*, 1876, p. 283.



CHARLES MONTAGU.



Charles Montagu was the fourth son of the Hon. Mr. George Montagu, who was the son of Henry, first Earl of Manchester.³ He was the one out of nine children who showed signs at a very early age of great ability; at fourteen he was sent to Westminster School, where unusual success in his work and a gift for extemporary epigrams attracted the attention of the famous Dr. Busby. Two years later Montagu was nominated a King's Scholar, and when twenty-one was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge. Judging from his subsequent career, this was a fortunate move for him. At that time there was very little choice for the younger sons of families other than the army and the Church. Not expecting to get anything like a good post in the army, the only prospect before Montagu seemed the Church. He went to Westminster School with this intention uppermost in his mind. It was, however, owing to his school friendship with George Stepney that he went to Cambridge instead of to Christ Church, Oxford, where he would undoubtedly have fallen under the influence of Dr. Fell, Dean and Bishop of the See of Oxford, a High Churchman with very decided views.⁴ George Stepney and Charles Montagu were very attached friends, and when the former was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, Montagu solicited to be sent to the same college rather than wait another year with the probability of being sent to the sister university, and thus be separated altogether from his friend.⁵ As it was, he became the pupil of Sir Isaac Newton, with whom he formed a warm friendship which continued through life. Finally he became the patron of the great philosopher, who at his death left him a legacy "as a mark of the honour and esteem he had for so great a man."⁶ At Cambridge his gift

³ *Life of 1715*, p. 2; *Parliamentary History*, vol. vi. p. 481; also *Dict. Nat. Biog.* art. Montagu. He was baptized at St. Margaret's, Westminster, on May 12th. Chester, *Abbey Register*.

⁴ Thorold Rogers, p. 18.

⁵ *Life*, pp. 4, 5.

⁶ See copy of his will at end of *Life*.

for versemaking, which had already shown itself at school, did not desert him. It was perhaps more a trick than a gift, but it seems to have been a favourite pastime for Montagu all through his life.⁷ At the best it was but poor stuff, hardly worth reading, except for the interest of seeing how low English verse could sink and yet at the time be considered by many, if not by all, as worthy of the name of poetry. His earliest poem was that on "The Death of his most sacred Majesty, King Charles II.",⁸ written, it seems, at the request of the College authorities, Trinity College being a royal foundation and therefore obliged to go into mourning at the death of royalty. All poems of eulogy to deceased celebrities at that time contained the same flattering words, the most flattering that could be found, and Montagu's were no exception to this rule. The opening lines are sufficient to illustrate this:—

Farewell, Great Charles, Monarch of Blest Renown,
 The best good man that ever filled a throne,
 Whom Nature, as her highest pattern, wrought,
 And mixed both Sexes' Virtues in one Draught.
 Wisdom for Councils, Bravery in war,
 With all the mild goodnature of the Fair.
 The woman's sweetness, temper'd manly wit,
 And loving power, did crown'd with meekness sit.
 His awful person Reverence engag'd,
 Which mild Address and tenderness assuag'd ;
 Thus the Almighty Gracious King above
 Does both command our Fear and win our Love.

Continuing in the same style, the poet compares the dead King even to the Almighty and King David—

To bridle Factions, stop Rebellion's course,
 By easy methods, vanquish without force,
 Relieve the good, bold stubborn foes subdue,
 Mildness in wrath, meekness in anger show,
 Were Arts Great Charles' prudence only knew.

⁷ See Walpole.

⁸ See *Lif'e of 1715*.

In conclusion, taking “the Thames, the ocean’s ‘darling, England’s pride,’ as the pleasing emblem of the reign,” he maintains that—

James is our Charles in all things but in name
Thus Thames is daily lost, yet still the same.

Five years later, after William’s victory of the Boyne, Montagu once more wrote flattering lines of congratulation, quite as poor, if not worse, than his first attempt. They were “An Epistle to the Right Hon. Charles, Earl of Dorset and Middlesex.”

But William’s Genius takes a wider scope
And gives the injured in all kingdoms, hope.
Born to subdue insulting Tyrants’ rage
The ornament and terror of the age.
The refuge, where afflict’d nations find
Relief from those Oppressors of mankind
Whom laws restrain not and no oaths can bind.

The whole poem is in the same exalted strain, and is monotonous reading. It hardly deserves the attention of any reader. There is, however, one production⁹ of Montagu’s, written in conjunction with Mathew Prior, a man possessing more poetic power, as infinitely more wit, which will always live and be bracketed with the poem of which it is a parody. Dryden, it will be remembered, published in 1684 his “Religio Laici,” a defence of the Church of England against the Dissenters, but which expressed some doubts with regard to revealed religion. These doubts were soon after dispersed by his joining the Roman Catholic Church. The first result of his change in creed was his allegorical poem “The Hind and the Panther,”¹⁰ published in 1687, in which he stated the traditions and arguments in favour of the Catholic faith. Montagu and Prior parodied this poem, “transversed it to the story of the ‘Country Mouse and the City Mouse,’ much malice mingled with a little wit.”

⁹ Written in 1687.

¹⁰ The Hind being the Church of Rome, the Panther the Church of England.

In the preface¹ the authors defend the design : " Is it not as easy to imagine two mice bilking coachmen and supping at the devil as to suppose a hind entertaining the panther at a hermit's cell, discussing the greatest mysteries of religion ? " Dryden's poem is full of caricature, and the parody is none the less so. Whatever its merit, it gained for Montagu the friendship of Lord Dorset, which led to his finally abandoning the idea of taking orders in favour of a political career. This poem was written in 1687 ; two years previously Montagu had tried with Newton to found a Philosophical Society, but with no success. The same year saw him created Master of Arts and made a Fellow of his college.

The young Montagu soon revealed his political views by signing the letter of invitation to William of Orange and joining a rising in Northamptonshire in favour of the Prince. In the Convention Parliament of 1688, which met at Westminster on January 22, and which declared the throne vacant, Montagu took his seat, and helped in the final settlement of William and Mary as King and Queen. His friend, the Earl of Dorset, was made Lord Chamberlain to the new Sovereign, and it was not long before he took the opportunity of introducing the promising young Montagu to King William. The story of this interview is almost too well known to need repetition. The Earl of Dorset presented him with the words, " May it please your Majesty, I have brought a mouse to have the honour of kissing your hand," at which the King smiled. When he had learnt the reason of this nickname, he replied, " You will do well to put me in the way of making a man of him," and ordered him a pension of £500 per annum.² Having finally abandoned the idea of taking orders, Montagu definitely gave his mind to polities, and became, by purchase, for the sum of £1,500, Clerk of the Privy Council.³ A short time before this he had married the

¹ See *Life of 1715*, p. 33 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.* p. 17.

³ February, 1689. See *Modern British Biography*.

Dowager Countess of Manchester,⁴ which further increased his position in the eyes of the world. It was not long before he obtained a seat in the Lower House and he rapidly made himself noticed by his eager support of the Whigs and by his talent in debate.

It was in the discussion concerning the regulation of trials in cases of high treason,⁵ on which occasion Montagu was placed at the head of the Committee, that he made his first speech of importance. Though only thirty years of age, he managed the debate with such decided skill and made his arguments so convincing that it was much commented upon and even mentioned by the Earl of Dorset to the King. It is related how during his speech, which up till this point had been fluent, Montagu suddenly hesitated and seemed unable to go on. Recovering himself, he, in a very clever way, made use of this misfortune to emphasize his argument “to enforce the necessity of allowing counsel to prisoners who were to appear before their judges; since he, who was not only innocent and unaccused, but one of their own members, was so dashed when he had to speak before that wise and illustrious assembly.”⁶ “How can I, Sir,” said the young orator, “produce a stronger argument in favour of this Bill than my own failure? My fortune, my character, my life are not at stake. I am speaking to an audience whose kindness might well inspire me with courage. And yet, from mere nervousness, from mere want of practice in addressing large assemblies, I have lost my recollection: I am unable to go on with my argument. How helpless, then, must be a poor man who, never having opened his lips in public, is called upon to reply, without a moment’s preparation, to the ablest and most experienced advocates in

⁴ *Biog. Dict.* art. Montagu.

⁵ December, 1691.

⁶ Walpole mentions this anecdote in his *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors of the Earl of Shaftesbury*. The story is first mentioned in the *Life of Montagu* (1715), also in Cunningham, *Lives of Eminent Englishmen*, vol. iv. p. 71.

the kingdom, and whose faculties are paralysed by the thought that, if he fails to convince his hearers, he will in a few hours die on the gallows, and leave beggary and infamy to those who are dearest to him."⁷ The outcome of this display of ability was an important one for the nation. He was appointed to the Treasury in March of the following year on the resignation of Thomas Pelham. His skill as a Minister of Finance was soon apparent, and his activity led to rapid promotion, until in 1694 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, one of the highest and most important offices in the kingdom.⁸ Only a man with a singularly clear head and a genius of no small order could have accomplished what Montagu did during the years 1692 onwards. The currency of the realm, as already has been seen,⁹ was in a very bad way; public credit was in a deplorable state; the expenses of the kingdom, largely owing to the war, were enormous, and the revenue, in spite of heavy taxes, was quite inadequate. To add to all these inconveniences, the clipping of the coinage was carried on to such an extent as to render its value exceedingly low. It was the government of Charles II. that was really to blame for this hopeless state of things. It had brought the credit of the English State to the lowest possible ebb. The fatal mistake of depositing the reserve of the treasure in the Exchequer had been made, and Charles, who had the control of the Exchequer, had refused to pay out. Consequently the credit of William III.'s government was exceedingly low, which made it wholly impossible to borrow any large sum. How was the reform of the currency to be achieved? How

⁷ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 644.

⁸ See Burnet, vol. iv. p. 194. "A young man, Mr. Montagu, began to make a great figure in the House of Commons. He had great vivacity and clearness, both of thought and expression. His spirit was at first turned to wit and poetry, which he continued still to encourage in others when he applied himself to more important business. He came to have great notions with relation to all the concerns of the Treasury and of the public funds and brought these matters into new and better methods."

⁹ See Somers, *supra*, p. 20.

could credit be re-established? How was the scarcity of money to be met? These were the problems which Montagu set himself to solve.

The war with France, which to the King was the most urgent matter, could only be carried on by loans, which loans were raised by appeals to the wealthy in London, with very great difficulty. The extraordinary expenses of government had in early times been met by subsidies. These subsidies were levied both on movables and on land, but the bulk of the money came from an assessment on the land at the nominal rate of 4s. in £. The great increase in the value of land had altered this and during the Commonwealth a different method had been adopted. In 1692, however, the Land Tax was re-introduced and re-organized, so that it brought in about £2,000,000. This sum, even, was considerably less than the sum required. The question in the minds of all, King and subjects alike, was: Will the war have to be dropped for lack of funds or can credit be obtained? Russell writes in despair to Shrewsbury,¹⁰ "Money or credit we must speedily have or all will be lost. If in England they could see as clearly as I do here, I am sure they would employ every means in their power, without too closely examining the difficulties. The greatest difficulty is ruin, and that we must encounter if we cannot speedily obtain credit to pay the troops in these parts. . . There is no alternative but to perish or find credit."

Montagu was alive to the situation. He acted with promptitude and with boldness. He recognized the necessity of restoring the currency and giving to the coinage its legal value. Fortunately for the country, the consideration of this difficult task was in the hands of four of the ablest men in the kingdom, Lord Somers, Locke the philosopher, Montagu and Sir Isaac Newton, who was made Master of the Mint. Locke, Montagu and Somers had for some time been in constant consultation as to how best to reach the

¹⁰ Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 121 (1696).

desired goal. Montagu, in particular, was emphatic that the method must be a thoroughly effective one.¹ Lord Somers² suggested that a proclamation should be given out that in three days the hammered coin should pass by weight only but that persons bringing it to the Mint should have the promise of a future payment of the difference between it and the real value of the coin. This was thought too bold and Montagu's³ plan was adopted: all those who deposited their clipped money in the Mint should have new money of full weight in exchange. A date was fixed by which time all the money was to be handed in. It was an expensive way of doing it and it had certainly very distinct drawbacks, but it achieved its purpose;⁴ the clipped depreciated coins were removed and new ones of legal weight put in their place.

This transaction was an obvious loss to the nation; besides this, the evils were temporarily aggravated, a check to the circulation followed which hindered trade, and the collection of public supplies was suspended. By whom was this loss to be borne? Part at any rate of the difficulty was met by the establishment of the Bank of England,⁴ an institution which will ever be coupled with the name of its founder, Montagu; and which ever since its foundation has played such a prominent part in the financial and com-

¹ Ruding, *Annals of Coinage*, vol. ii. p. 398.

² See Somers, *supra*, pp. 20, 21. Also Fox Beurne, *Life of Locke*, vol. ii. p. 325 *et seq.*; Burnet, vol. iv. p. 290; Dalrymple, *Memoirs*, vol. iii. bk. 4, p. 62; Rogers Ruding, vol. ii. p. 404.

³ See Burnet, vol. iv. p. 288. "The state of the coin was considered, and there were great and long debates about the proper remedies; the motion of raising the money above its intrinsic value was still much pressed; many apprehended this matter could not be cured without casting us into great disorders; our money, they thought, would not pass, and so the markets would not be furnished, and it is certain that if there had been ill-humours then stirring in the nation this might have cast us into great convulsions. But none happened, to the disappointment of our enemies, who had their eyes and hopes fixed on the effects this might produce." See also Rev. Rogers Ruding, *Annals of Coinage*, 1817, vol. ii. p. 387 *et seq.*: Continuation of Rapin, pp. 305, 308.

⁴ The Tories hit on the idea of setting up a National Land Bank in opposition to the Bank of England. Ranke, vol. v. pp. 122, 123.

mercial history of the country. The actual originator of the scheme of a National Bank was a Scotchman, William Paterson, who had wished to copy those already existing in Holland and Genoa. He never carried it through, and wrecked himself, as well as many others, in the fatal Darien Expedition.⁵ In its origin the Bank of England was not only a finance company but a Whig finance company. The City, being Whig, supported it. Montagu's plan was this: £1,200,000 should be raised at what was then a moderate rate of interest, 8 per cent.⁶ It was made a loan thrown open to public subscription. In order to induce the public to advance the money they were elected subscribers of a chartered company, the company of the Bank of England. It was a great success. In ten days the sum was subscribed.⁷ All loans were placed in the keeping of this new company. Henceforward the Bank of England had the privilege of being the exclusive possessor of the government balances.

Prior to the establishment of the Bank of England,¹ banking with private goldsmiths had been the fashion; the convenience of cheques in the place of ready money payments had already become evident, and the advantage to the banker who could make use of the ready money was equally evident. The fault of this system had been its insecurity. This insecurity was now removed; the lenders were allowed to treat their loan to Government as part of their capital, the interest of which gave them the necessary supply of ready money.

The origin of the National Debt was another of Montagu's achievements. The Committee of Ways and Means met, with Somers in the chair. Montagu proposed to raise £1,000,000 by way of loan; the proposal was carried

⁵ The Darien Company, although a failure, was highly significant, for it demonstrated the growth of a commercial ambition in the Scottish nation.

⁶ Green, vol. iv. p. 62. Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 499.

⁷ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 502. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 223.

¹ The foundation day of the Bank of England may be said to be April 18th, 1694, the day on which the Bill passed the Commons.

and it was ordered that a Bill should be brought in. By this law the lenders became life annuitants and the interest of the loan was secured on new duties on beer and other liquors. This was the origin of the National Debt, which has existed ever since and which during the last few years has grown to such a prodigious size.

Immediately after the Bill which established the Bank of England had been passed, Montagu was appointed to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.² The following month he was sworn a member of the Privy Council and the next year he was returned for the City of Westminster.³

In 1696 public credit was again at its lowest ebb; tallies on the Exchequer were at from 30 per cent. to 60 per cent. discount; bank notes at 20; and financiers predicted a general bankruptcy. Montagu was not disturbed. With his usual foresight he devised a simple and bold plan of remedy which was popularly called the General Mortgage. New taxes were imposed, old taxes were increased; the Bank of England was enlarged by a new subscription, which was managed in such a way as to raise the value both of the notes of the Corporation and of the public securities. By this means confidence was restored, credit revived and with it grew the popularity of Montagu among the Whigs, for they realized that it was owing to the genius and firmness of him alone that the State was restored to health and security. The Tories, too, were forced to admit that all his schemes had succeeded, that his influence thereby in the House of Commons was unequalled, and that even in the Cabinet his power was daily increasing.⁴ The Bill of Attainder against Sir John Fenwick received his support and Macaulay gives us a rude outline

² *Lords' Journals*, April 25th, 1694. Cooke, *History of Party*, vol. i. p. 530. Ranke, vol. v. p. 84.

³ Macaulay, vol. iv. pp. 614, 615. Luttrell, vol. iii. p. 543.

⁴ "In the House of Commons Mr. Montagu had gained such a visible ascendant over all that were zealous for the King's service, that he gave the law to the rest, which he did always with great spirit but sometimes with too assuring an air." Burnet, vol. iv. pp. 397, 398.

of what must have been a most effective peroration:—⁵
 “ Gentlemen warn us not to furnish King James with a precedent which, if ever he should be restored, he may use against ourselves. Do they really believe that, if that evil day shall ever come, this just and necessary law will be the pattern which he will imitate? No, Sir, his model will be, not our Bill of Attainder, but his own; not our Bill, which, on full proof, and after a most fair hearing, inflicts deserved retribution on a single guilty head; but his own Bill, which, without a defence, without an investigation, without an accusation, doomed near three thousand people, whose only crimes were their English blood and their Protestant faith, the men to the gallows and the women to the stake. That is the precedent which he has set, and which he will follow. In order that he never may be able to follow it, in order that the fear of a righteous punishment may restrain those enemies of our country who wish to see him ruling in London as he ruled at Dublin, I give my vote for the Bill.”

In 1695 Montagu's connection with the Royal Society began. Among many other honours bestowed upon him, he was elected President of this Society and he acted in that capacity from November, 1695, until November, 1698.⁶

Prior, to whom perhaps more than to Montagu the success of the poem “The City Mouse and the Country Mouse” was due, was indignant at his friend's preferment and his own neglect.

My friend Charles Montagu's preferr'd,
 Nor would I have it long observ'd
 That one mouse eats while t'other's starv'd.

The posts he obtained were certainly not so important as those which fell to Montagu, but he was not altogether forgotten by the Earl of Dorset. He was appointed secretary to the Earl of Berkeley, ambassador to the Hague. After many other temporary honours, he was made a Commissioner

⁵ Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 752.

⁶ Weld, *History of the Royal Society*, vol. i. p. 331.

of Trade. In 1701 he entered the House of Commons as representative for the borough of East Grinstead, and abandoning his former friends, the Whigs, joined the Tories in impeaching Lord Somers. His subsequent career was in opposition to the Whig party, and it was not until death that the two who had been friends in their youth were re-united in the Abbey.

For many years the friends of Newton, Montagu especially, had been anxious to get Newton a post. Among others, the office of Provost of King's College was suggested. They repeatedly failed and Newton put their failure down to insincerity. In 1692 he told Locke "that he is fully convinced that Mr. Montagu upon an old grudge, which he thought had been worn out, was false to him, and that he had done with him, intending to sit still unless my Lord Monmouth was still his friend."⁷ This was a misjudgment of Montagu; he had not forgotten his friend, and when, in 1699, the post of Master of the Mint became vacant he used his influence as First Lord of the Treasury to secure the post for Newton. It was worth £1,200 to £1,500 per annum, and Newton held it for the rest of his life. Montagu's friendship was extended to Newton's niece, Mrs. Catherine Barton, who was said to be a "lady of wit, beauty and accomplishments." His relationship with this woman is a disputed point. Some allege there was a private marriage between them, others that it was merely a warm friendship. Whatever it was, he left very large bequests to her at his death "as a token of the sincere love, affection and esteem I have long had for her person, and as a small recompense for the pleasure and happiness I have had in her conversation."⁸

Further scope for Montagu's genius as a financier was found in the formation of the General East India Company.

⁷ Brewster, *Life of Sir Isaac Newton*, vol. ii. p. 117.

⁸ See *Life of 1715*, Appendix vi. See also *Notes and Queries*, first series, vol. viii. p. 429 *et seq.*; second series, p. 162 *et seq.* for relationship between Montagu and Catharine Barton.

It was in the session of 1698 that the important question of the Indian trade was settled, and with it, perhaps, the zenith of Montagu's success as a Finance Minister was reached. Elizabeth had granted a charter to the East India Company and since that time it had passed through many and diverse phases. The company, originally consisting of Whigs, had passed into the hands of Sir Josiah Child, and under his regime it became closely allied to the Tories. In the years 1691 and 1693 the question had been strongly pressed upon the attention of Parliament. In 1698 Montagu undertook to reorganize the company, when the old company offered £700,000 at 4 per cent. as the price of the renewal of its charter. Montagu, anxious to procure more money and thus diminish the embarrassing position of the government, anxious also to establish a second great Whig society of capitalists, who could support him as the Bank already had done, opposed the company and brought forward a scheme of his own. He suggested forming a general company, and proposed that a loan of £2,000,000 at 8 per cent. be advanced to government, and that the subscribers should receive the monopoly of the Indian trade, but not necessarily be bound to trade as a joint stock company, unless they desired it. He carried the Bill with triumph through Parliament and in two or three days the required sum was forthcoming. On September 3 the Bill was carried, the original company in vain making a belated offer of the same sum to their opponents. On September 5 most of the subscribers expressed a desire to be a joint stock company, which was consequently chartered by Act of Parliament by the title of "The English Company trading to the East Indies."⁸ It is exceedingly interesting to read Montagu's correspondence with the Earl of Shrewsbury⁹ for it gives an insight into the jealousy felt for Montagu and all the Whigs who were so successful; a sentiment which ultimately pro-

⁸ For the East India Company, see Macaulay, vol. iv. p. 129 *et seq.*; vol. v. p. 62 *et seq.*

⁹ *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 529 *et seq.*

duced the fall of the Whigs. Montagu felt the strength of his position when he wrote, "The malice of my friends has been very remarkable, but I can assure you it has not given me an unquiet hour, and before many days are past you will hear I have carried the war into their own country."¹⁰

Montagu was well aware of his own influence in the House, but he was not perhaps so fully aware that that year, 1698, was the high water-mark of his power and that the decline was close at hand. In the following year his influence showed signs of waning, and together with it the Whig ministry was hurrying to dissolution. In the elections Montagu was again returned for Westminster but in other constituencies his party was less successful. Wharton had to face one defeat after another. The tide had turned and the Whigs knew it. It is the fate of almost any man who works reforms and leaves thereby some mark on the history of his country to make enemies. Montagu shared this common fate of men such as he was. By the Tories he had long been hated as a Whig, but the power of his influence and the rapidity of his rise had brought him many enemies even among his own party. He owed everything to his own merit; by sheer dint of industry he had worked himself up to the highest posts in the kingdom; his gift for debate had won him the ear of the House; his skill in financial and commercial matters had won him the confidence of the city. But this exceptional success had turned his head; he became proud,¹ and unpopular. He hastened his decline by an act which appeared grasping, whatever his real motives may have been. Realizing that his party would soon be defeated, and anxious to secure for himself some lasting post, he set his eye on the Auditorship of the Exchequer, which was vacant owing to the death of Sir Robert Howard. His

¹⁰ June 18th-20th, 1698.

¹ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 398, note a. "For assuming an air which did him infinite hurt and lowered at last his credit very much in the House of Commons."

own office in the Treasury and this post were incompatible; he therefore devised the scheme of vesting the latter in his brother, Christopher, with the object of keeping it for himself.² This singular act astonished his friends. Somers wrote to Shrewsbury:³ "The business of Mr. Montagu gives me great disquiet. It was done much on the sudden, without the advice or knowledge of many of his friends. I wish it may turn well for himself, but I do not see how it can turn well for the public. If he quits the Treasury, somebody wholly of another sort will succeed. If he keeps both places, I fear it will be a new story of envy."

Manchester wrote to Montagu with much the same note of astonishment:⁴ "I am far from considering my own interest alone, when I wished you had done otherwise in relation to the Treasury. I can easily imagine a step of this nature would not be made without consulting your friends; but I am sorry to find my Lord Chancellor does not wholly approve of it, and him I take to be one of the best you have."

Discontent was rife in 1699. Montagu, affronted by the events of the preceding session, resolved to withdraw from the position of Chief Minister of Finance. The Auditorship, which he had made sure some months ago, was ready for him. He took it and resigned his other posts.⁵ This did not give him the peace he hoped. The Tory chiefs continued to assail him, but the attempt to impeach him in 1701 and 1702 failed, just as the similar attempt on Somers and Orford failed. In 1700 Montagu had been created Baron Halifax⁶ and so was removed from the Commons, where he was growing more and more unpopular, to the

² Macaulay, vol. v. p. 161. Vernon, vol. ii. pp. 165, 166. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 406, note h.

³ October 25th-November 4th, 1698. *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 557.

⁴ Paris, Dec. 8th, 1699. Cole, *Memoirs of Affairs of State*, 1733, p. 82.

⁵ Nov. 18th, 1699. Luttrell, vol. iv. p. 583.

⁶ Vernon, *Correspondence*, vol. ii. p. 143. Burnet, vol. iv. p. 470. Cooke, *History of Party*, vol. i. p. 536.

Upper House. But this was not enough to guard him against the fury of his enemies. In 1701 a plan of impeachment was devised⁷ by the Commons, his share in the Partition Treaty being made the ground of accusation. He was charged with having advised the two treaties and also of having held two offices that were incompatible, those of Commissioner of the Treasury and Auditor of the Exchequer. Montagu was ready with his answer, however, and was acquitted by the Lords.⁸

But the Whig chiefs recognized the insecurity of their position, which with the death of William and the accession of Anne was amply realized. The members of the Junto all lost office⁹ and the new ministry was almost entirely Tory. One cause, perhaps, of this decisive change from a Whig government to a large Tory majority was that the nation was utterly weary of the war. The panic about an invasion of England by France had subsided; the recent events on the Continent had been sufficient to satisfy the pride of the nation; and all were beginning to wonder when the war would really close and when heavy taxes would cease to be levied. Resistance to France had been the steady policy of the Whigs; they consequently received the brunt of the nation's displeasure and were hopelessly outnumbered at the elections.

In opposition the Junto were still united and powerful. Halifax still swayed the Lords by his convincing oratory, and the knowledge of this angered his enemies, who had hoped to lessen his power in the Upper House. In all the important measures of Anne's reign his name stands out as an active and interested member. The first of these occasions was the free conference between the two Houses on

⁷ Burnet, vol. iv. p. 485 *et seq.* Ranke, vol. v. p. 256.

⁸ Impeachment in full, Howell, *State Trials*, vol. xiv. pp. 233-250. See also Burnet, vol. iv. p. 508 *et seq.* Continuation of Rapin, p. 459 *et seq.* Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 113.

⁹ Somerville, *Queen Anne*, p. 3. Ranke, vol. v. p. 311. Wyon, vol. i. p. 65.

the Bill of Occasional Conformity. The Lords sent a most able committee to represent them: the brilliant Earl of Peterborough; Burnet, the most learned Bishop on the Bench; Somers, the greatest lawyer and the most scrupulous of men; and Montagu, who was undoubtedly the greatest financier of the age.¹⁰ Halifax played a leading part in the opposition to this Bill.¹ The Tories, it must be remembered, were the High Church party, to whom the rites and doctrines of the Established Church were very dear. They were very hostile to the Dissenters and Roman Catholics and were jealous of their pretensions to equality. The Whigs, on the other hand, favoured toleration. Occasional conformity, by which was meant Dissenters complying with the provisions of the Test Act in order to qualify themselves to hold office or join the Corporation, was regarded by the Tories and by the Queen, who was a Tory to the backbone, as a most outrageous thing. The Whig peers stoutly resisted the Bill and it was rejected. In November of the same year, 1703, the measure was brought up again. It did not, however, receive the same support from government, for the two leading spirits, Marlborough and Godolphin, were already beginning to waver and were gradually inclining to the side of the Whigs. It was again defeated in the Lords. The following year it was again introduced. As before, it passed through all the readings in the Commons, but it was thrown out in the Upper House by an increased majority. Marlborough and Godolphin gave silent votes against the Bill. The result of the elections of 1705 was a Whig majority and for the time the much vexed question slept. It was not till 1711, under the government of Harley and Bolingbroke, that the Bill was passed, and then almost without opposition.²

¹⁰ Luttrell.

¹ Halifax and Somers were managers on behalf of the Lords. Rapin, vol. iii. p. 581. Paul Chamberlen, *Impartial History*, p. 67.

² *Parl. Hist.* vol. vi. pp. 481, 482. Stanhope, *Queen Anne*, vol. ii. p. 246 (Tauchnitz ed.).

With regard to this measure, the Junto were at one, and similarly with regard to the next important and, perhaps, the most weighty one of the reign, the union of Scotland and England. If it had not been for the united efforts of the Junto it is doubtful whether this great work of the reign would have been carried through. In England, perhaps, the mind of the nation was made up. To her the necessity of union with Scotland had become much more urgent since the year of the Darien Expedition. This Scotch colony had failed, but not before it had changed the whole aspect of the relations between the two countries. Scotland had shown that her ambition lay in the direction of a commercial state, and England from that time began to regard her as a commercial rival. Trade could therefore be made an argument either in favour of or against union. England had it in her power to close or to open the trade of the world to Scotland. She chose the latter course, recognizing the advantage of union with Scotland—in time of war. William III. had declared strongly in favour of it more than once, and he may be said to have paved the way for the completion of the union, which took place in the reign of his successor. It was in Scotland that the opposition was vital. A natural pride in her independent monarchy and her independent parliament made her very reluctant to see them obliterated. In Edinburgh, the capital, public anger became intense; its citizens were indignant at the thought of their beautiful city ceasing to be a capital. Religion, was, however, the question which they took most to heart; the Scotch feared that a union of the two kingdoms would mean danger to the Presbyterian Scotch Church. This point was settled by each nation passing Acts of Parliament to secure for each its constitution and independence. There was to be one State but two Churches. Another point of difficulty, the law, was decided; the Scotch law and administration of justice was to remain unaltered.

The Commissioners³ appointed by the Queen, of which body all the Junto were important and active members, drew up these decisions in 1706 and in 1707 they were carried. Lord Somers and Lord Halifax were the leading spirits of the Commission and it was largely owing to their enthusiasm and their wise persuasion that the matter was decided in so satisfactory a manner. In 1708 a Bill "to render the Union more secure" was passed. From that time the two countries became one under the name of Great Britain; the Scotch Church and the Scotch law were left untouched; a common system of taxation and a common system of coinage were adopted, and to both nations the rights of trade were on an equal footing. A single Parliament was henceforth to represent both, forty-five Scotch members being fixed as the relative representation of the population of Scotland.

When the Bill for the naturalization of the House of Hanover and for the better security of the succession of the Crown in the Protestant line was passed into an Act, Halifax was selected to proceed as ambassador to the Court of Hanover.⁴ He carried over the Act, with the insignia of the most noble Order of the Garter, to the Electoral Prince in his capital. During his residence at the Court he was treated with much ceremony and courtesy. It was in this same year, 1706, that Halifax set on foot a project for which all lovers of books and learning can never cease to thank him. He started the idea of a public library. The records of the kingdom were mostly lodged in the Tower, where they were in a lamentable state of confusion and disorder. He had these seen to, but he did more than this. The famous library of manuscripts collected by Sir Robert Cotton was one of the greatest collections in Europe; it had been

³ For full list of Commissioners see *Parl. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 534. *Lockhart Papers*, vol. i. p. 141.

⁴ Somerville, *Queen Anne*, p. 126. Macpherson, *Original Papers*, 1775, vol. ii. p. 36. Letter from Sunderland to Elector. *Ibid.* p. 40.

left to the public at his death but in such a way as to be of little use. Halifax preserved this valuable collection and made it accessible to the public, a nucleus round which has gathered the famous library of the British Museum. Every subsequent student owes a very large debt to Halifax for this.

In the year 1709 Halifax was made keeper of Bushey Park and Hampton Court; in 1710 he was joint plenipotentiary to the Hague, to be present at the congress for the negotiation of peace.⁵

During the years 1705 to 1707 the gradual introduction of Whigs to high posts, and the gradual and increasing unpopularity of the Tory ministry, had been the trend of public opinion. It was not only the Government that was changing its views, but the nation at large. An interest in the war was reviving; this, and disgust at the conduct of the Tories, produced a change in favour of the Whigs. Marlborough's long cherished plan of a composite ministry had its trial, but only a short one. In 1708 Harley and his colleagues were forced to resign; the Whigs had shown their strength; they were once more at the head of affairs. Somers was President of the Council, Wharton was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Sunderland was Secretary of State and before long Orford was at the head of the Admiralty.

This triumph of the Whigs was a brief one. Greed for high office and distinction had, to some extent, swamped their motives for the good of their party; they had bullied the Queen till she was forced into accepting them and it was only with the very greatest reluctance that she would consent to Orford and Sunderland receiving such responsible posts. The persistence of the Whigs, and of the Junto in particular, had turned many against them. They had shown their power, they had grasped the control of the kingdom, but they had at the same time lost the support

⁵ Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. iv. p. 357; vol. v. p. 295. Burnet, vol. v. p. 262.

of the nation. The trial of Dr. Sacheverell, in which the Whigs showed indignant and unrelenting judgment against the man, marked their downfall.

Dr. Henry Sacheverell, of Low Church parentage, a strong upholder of the doctrine of non-resistance, had latterly won a name for extreme High Church views. It was two sermons of his, in which he attacked the Revolution and declared the Church in danger "even in Her Majesty's reign," that angered the Whig party. The preacher, at the recommendation of the Mayor, who sympathised entirely with his views, had the sermons printed and they had a large circulation throughout the kingdom. The matter was brought up at a Cabinet meeting; Somers and the wiser of the members advocated letting it alone, or at best merely prosecuting the preacher in a court of law.⁶ That was not the opinion of the majority; they urged impeachment before the House of Lords. This carried the day, and the sermons became the subject of a great State trial, becoming in its turn a party question of much intensity.

The trial lasted for three weeks. The Queen appeared in her box nearly every day. By his friends and supporters Sacheverell was regarded as a hero, shamefully and unjustly persecuted. Halifax took a very active part during the trial; he was one of the judges and he was one who pleaded for a mild sentence, that it should be "content" or "not content" instead of "guilty" or "not guilty."⁷ By a majority of 69 a verdict of "guilty" was eventually given.⁸ The sentence was, however, a mild one: three years' suspension from preaching and the burning of the obnoxious sermon. Mild as the sentence was, it was dearly purchased by the Whigs; it was impossible to conceal the feeling of the nation. Ably and eloquently as the Whigs

⁶ Stanhope, vol. ii. p. 135. Wyon, vol. ii. p. 170 *et seq.*

⁷ *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 882. For the trial in full see *ibid.* p. 805 *et seq.*

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 884. For list of those who voted for and against see *ibid.* p. 886.

explained the necessity of the trial in order to vindicate the Revolution and to secure the Protestant Succession, they had utterly failed to convince the nation that their real object was nothing more than a destruction of the Church in the person of Dr. Sacheverell. The elections which followed in twelve months showed at one stroke the unpopularity of the Whig party. A Tory ministry, with Harley and St. John as leaders, was once more at the head of affairs.

It was with this Tory ministry that Louis attempted to continue the interrupted peace negotiations of 1709. Harley's policy seems to have been directed towards a restoration of the Stuarts and alliance with France. The Whigs, always advocates of the war, were strongly opposed to this, and lost no opportunity in showing that they would not move an iota from their policy of war and support of the Protestant Succession. Steps were taken by Harley to get Marlborough on to his side. Marlborough was for peace, but only for peace; he did not wish to see a Stuart restoration. Learning this, Harley's one object was the complete ruin of Marlborough. On his return from the campaign of 1711 he was attacked in Parliament and stripped of all his offices, the command of the army being given to the Duke of Ormond, a Jacobite of the strongest type. He received secret orders to do nothing, and his refusal to attack the French called forth much indignation from the Whigs.

On May 28, 1712, to a full House, Halifax urged the necessity of carrying on the war with vigour,⁹ and moved an address to the Queen, "desiring her to lay before the House the orders she had sent to the General and to order him to act offensively in concert with the allies." A stormy debate followed; the spirits of the Whigs were roused. The Tories, and the Treasurer in particular, urged the folly of risking a battle when the terms of peace were so nearly arranged. Halifax's motion was pressed to a division and

⁹ *Parl. History*, p. 1136. Coxe, *Life of Marlborough*, vol. vi. p. 190.

was lost by 68 votes to 40.¹⁰ The following year, March 31, 1713, the peace was signed at Utrecht, the terms of which are too well known to need repetition here. The great war was at an end, and the question of the Succession, now made more urgent by the failing health of the Queen, was that which occupied the attention of the nation. It was a very great question and one in which the members of the Junto took a very decided and very united position. They were one and all for the House of Hanover, and their zeal in the cause led them even sometimes to forget all consideration for the reigning Sovereign, to forget that the Pretender and Anne were children of the same father. Halifax moved that an address be presented to the Queen to renew her effort to have the Pretender removed by the Court of Lorraine; Wharton went even further, and moved that the Queen should issue a proclamation offering a reward to any person taking the Pretender alive or dead.¹¹

The Whigs, who had always been staunch supporters of the principles of the Revolution, bearing in mind how much it had done for England, were determined that its work should not be undone. During William's reign there had been no fear of this; even as long as Anne should live there was no danger; it was the question of her successor that gave them trouble.

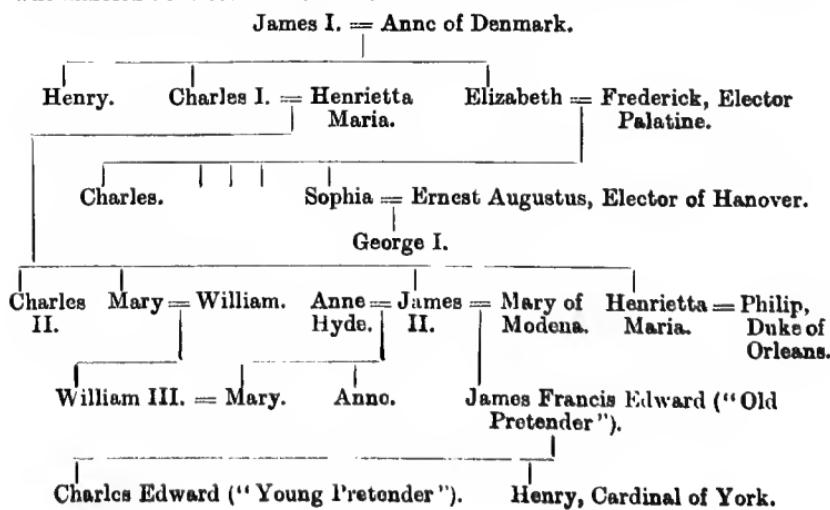
The Bill of Rights, the first statute of William and Mary, had settled the crown on the heirs of Mary; failing them, on Anne and her heirs. Should Anne die without heirs the crown was to pass to those of William by any subsequent marriage. Mary died childless, William did not marry again, and when Anne's only child who reached manhood, the Duke of Gloucester, died in 1700, the Whigs grew anxious as to who should succeed, and immediately began to work for the Hanoverian House. In 1701 the Act of Settlement settled the Succession upon the Electress

¹⁰ *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 1138.

¹¹ Lecky, vol. i. p. 114.

Sophia of Hanover² and her heirs, and as a further security stipulated that the Sovereign of England must be a member of the National Church. This would have been satisfactorily carried through without opposition if a Whig ministry had been in power during the last few years of Anne's reign. But it was a strong Tory ministry, and whether wholly Jacobite at heart or not, its opponents felt confident that the aim of the Tories was to restore the Pretender and the Stuart line. It is not easy to discern how far the Tory party corresponded with the Jacobite party, though very many Tories were Jacobites, and all Jacobites were Tories. One of the men at the head of the State, Bolingbroke, had constantly been in correspondence with the Pretender. A hope of office in the next reign made him support the Stuart Pretender. The question of the Church did not concern him, for he had no belief in Christianity; he knew well that the part he had already played had made him very unpopular with the Elector of Hanover; his only hope of office lay in support of the Pretender. How far Harley helped in the plot of Bolingbroke it is even more difficult to ascertain.

² The Electress Sophia was a descendent of Elizabeth, sister of Charles I., who married the Elector Palatine :—



He had frequently made expression of friendliness to the Pretender, but his constant wavering of opinion, his characteristic indolence and, above all, his love of intrigue and "backstairs policy," prevented him from taking any very prominent part in the conspiracy. Bolingbroke had supporters in the Cabinet, but he realized that hasty action would be fatal. The new Parliament of 1714 was again Tory. The Whigs were resolved to use arms, if necessary, to secure the throne for the Hanoverian Elector. But they were saved from this necessity. A schism within the ministry was gradually weakening its power. Harley, still undecided, and still strongly in sympathy with the Low Church interest, would not wholly support Bolingbroke's vigorous policy. The Schism Act,³ an extreme High Church measure, brought their difference to a head. This Act maintained that no one, unless a member of the Church of England, should keep a school or teach the younger generation. Harley, a Dissenter by birth, could not support this Bill. With his usual indecision and love of deception, he played with it, angered the Queen and brought about his own dismissal from office. This gave Bolingbroke more hope of success. He lost no time in forming a purely Jacobite ministry and, had it not been for the Queen's sudden illness, his plan might have succeeded. The last week of Anne's life was one of strife and excitement. Who was to succeed Oxford as Lord Treasurer? Fortunately for the Whigs and for the country, her choice fell upon Shrewsbury, in whom she was inclined to trust. He, it will be remembered, had been Secretary of State in William's reign; he was a Protestant by conversion. He had been at one time suspected of treasonable communication with the Stuarts, but William had refused to believe it. When he received the White Staff from Anne on her dying bed with the words, almost the last she uttered, "Use it for the good of my people," the question of the Protest-

³ For debate in Lords on Schism Act, see *Parl. History*, vol. vi. p. 1353.

ant Succession was safe. Whatever he may have done in the past, Shrewsbury was now thoroughly loyal to the Protestant Succession. The Whigs gave a sigh of relief; they felt that the Jacobite party had no chance. They immediately made ready, for the Queen's death could not be long delayed; troops were collected, and the Elector summoned over to England. When Anne died on August 1, 1714,⁴ he was quietly proclaimed King of Great Britain and Ireland as George I., and there was no need for the use of arms. Contrary to all expectation, this great change was carried through without bloodshed and almost without any difficulty.

Halifax had been one of the strongest supporters of the Hanoverian succession. The scheme for bringing the Elector over to England was formulated in his house; he had been selected to carry the Act and the insignia of the Order of the Garter to the Electoral Prince, and in 1714 he succeeded in procuring a writ to summon the Elector to the House of Peers as Duke of Cambridge. This loyal devotion attached him to the House of Hanover and in the new reign he was rewarded.⁵ He was one of the Lords Justices till the arrival of the King, who did not land in England till September 18.⁶ Even before he had set foot in his new kingdom it was clear which way things were going. Bolingbroke was dismissed from his office of Secretary of State; Lord Townshend was his successor and soon rose to the rank of Prime Minister. Ormond and Oxford were treated with cold indifference. A Whig ministry was soon called together. At the elections the Whigs obtained an immense majority, and the Parliament which met in 1715 ushered in the period of Whig ascendancy which lasted till the accession of George III. to the throne. Halifax was ap-

⁴ Lecky, vol. i. p. 165.

⁵ *Life of Newton*, vol. ii. p. 269. *Biog. Brit.* p. 3155.

⁶ Lecky, vol. i. p. 168.

pointed First Lord of the Treasury⁷ on October 11, 1714. On the 16th, he received the Order of the Garter; on the 19th, he was raised to the dignity of an Earl, as Viscount Sunbury and Earl of Halifax. In December, he was made Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, and on March 21, 1715, he took his seat once more in the Lords.⁸

He was to be permitted only just to see the complete triumph of his party and of the Whig policy before his vigorous and notable life was brought to a close. On May 15 he was taken suddenly ill with inflammation of the lungs, and died on the following Thursday,⁹ the 26th. He was buried in the Abbey in General Monk's vault,¹⁰ on the north side of King Henry VII.'s Chapel, according to his own wish; in his will he desired "to be buried privately in Westminster Abbey and to have a handsome plain monument."¹¹ He died without issue. His superior title expired; the barony reverted to his nephew, George Montagu. Within a few months of each other died two of the greatest Whig statesmen, the two who had worked hardest for the cause of the Revolution, the two who had most earnestly desired to see the Protestant Succession secured. They were permitted to see it and no more. There is a similarity between these two, Somers and Montagu. Both great statesmen, both orators, both magnificent patrons of genius and learning, they took their seats in the House for the first time on the same day, both rose rapidly to the highest posts in the State,

⁷ Coxe and Lord Mahon say that Halifax was mortally disappointed at not being made Lord High Treasurer and began negotiations with the Tories. Of this there is no evidence and it seems that he was too sincerely loyal to Whig principles to have allowed of that. See Coxe, *Life of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i. p. 81. Mahon, *England*, vol. i. p. 133.

⁸ *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. xx. p. 26. *Nat. Biog.*

⁹ *Life of 1715*, p. 260. Calamy, *Historical Account of His own Life*, vol. ii. p. 312.

¹⁰ Stanley, *Historical Memoirs of Westminster Abbey*, p. 219. Chester, *Westminster Abbey Registers*, 1876, p. 283. Neale, *Westminster Abbey*, vol. i. pt. ii. p. 634.

¹¹ *Life of Halifax*, Appendix i. Copy of will.

weathered storms of faction, and both retained the esteem of their party. The influence which Montagu won over his party was second to that of Somers alone.

Halifax was one of the original members of the Kit-Cat Club, which was established in the year 1703. It being the custom of the time to inscribe lines on the toasting glasses, his facility for versifying was put to good use. It is interesting to read them, not because they are poetical productions of any value, but rather as examples of the custom, and as indicating which ladies of high rank enjoyed the most popularity. This is one to the Duchess of Beaufort:—

Offspring of a tuneful sire
Blest with more than mortal fire,
Likeness of a mother's face
Blest with more than mortal grace.
You with double charms surprise,
With his wit and with his eyes.

Or again to Lady Sunderland:—

All nature's charms in Sunderland appear
Bright as her eyes and as her reason clear ;
Yet still their force, to men not safely known,
Seems undiscovered to herself alone.

There is also one to a foreigner, Mlle. Sparheime:—

Admired in Germany, adored in France,
Your charms to brighter glory here advance ;
The stubborn Britons own your beauty's claim,
And with their native toasts enrol your name.

One could add many more,² as for instance to Lady Mary Churchill, the Duchess of Richmond. It required small poetic skill to pen them. One of his biographers says "they are far the completest of his writings," but like the rest of his verse there is nothing admirable in them, yet they gave every satisfaction to the period for which they were written. Dr. Johnson, who included the poems of Halifax in his edition of the British poets, observes that "it would

² See *Memoirs of Kit-Cat Club*, p. 107 *et seq.*

now be esteemed no honour by a contributor to the monthly bundle to be told that in strains, either familiar or solemn, he sings like Montagu." As a patron of literature and encourager of writers of the day he stands out in a more striking way. Addison, Congreve, Newton, Prior and Stepney were all indebted to him for preferment. He was praised and flattered by nearly all the poets of the day, all, perhaps, except Swift and Pope. Pope writes of his patronage with the bitterest scorn in his Prologue to the "Satires":—

Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
 Sate full blown Bufo puff'd by every quill
 Fed with soft dedication all day long,
 Horace and he went hand and hand in song.
 His library (where busts of poets dead
 And a true Pindar stood without a head)
 Receiv'd of wits an undistinguished race,
 Who first his judgment ask'd and then a place :
 Much they extolled his pictures, much his seat,
 And flattered every day, and some days eat.
 Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
 He paid some bards with port and some with praise,
 To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
 And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
 Dryden alone (what wonder ?) came not nigh,
 Dryden alone escaped this judging eye ;
 But still the great have kindness in reserve,
 He helped to bury whom he helped to starve.*

Swift declares that Halifax only gave encouragement in the form of "good words and good dinners," yet he adds that "he is a great encourager of learning and learned men and the patron of the Muses."³ There was a friendship between Swift and Halifax; and very probably Halifax made many an effort to keep Swift on the side of the Whigs. Swift was asked to dine,⁴ to stay at his country house; he saw more of Halifax than any other Whig. Swift writes, "I told him he was the only Whig in England I loved or

* Pope, *Works*, vol. ii. p. 153.

³ Swift, *Works*, vol. xii. p. 226.

⁴ *Ibid.* vol. ii. pp. 30, 44, 91; October 2nd, 1710; October 13th; November 28th.

had any good opinion of";⁵ and again, "I love the young fellow and am resolved to stir the people to do something for him."⁶ Swift, no doubt, hoped for preferment through Halifax, and Halifax had even given him cause to hope for a canonry of Westminster. A letter from Halifax to Swift, written on October 6, 1709, is worth quoting, being as it is a perfect example of a courtier's letter to a man of literary standing; condescending, courteous and probably utterly insincere:—

SIR,—Our friend Mr. Addison telling me that he was to write to you tonight, I would not let his packet go away without telling you how much I am concerned to find them returned without you. I am quite ashamed of myself and my friends to see you left in a place so incapable of testing you; and to see so much merit and so great qualities unrewarded by those who are sensible of them. Mr. Addison and I are entered into a new confederacy, never to give over the pursuit, nor to cease reminding those, who can serve you, till your worth is placed in that light it ought to shine in. Dr. Smith holds out still, but he cannot be immortal. The situation of his prebend would make me doubly concerned in serving you, and upon all occasions that shall offer I will be your constant solicitor, your sincere admirer and your unalterable friend. I am your most humble and obedient servant.*

Swift himself wrote on the back of this letter: "I kept this letter as a true original of courtiers and court promises."

In his "Present State of Wit" Swift compares Steele and Addison "to the two famous statesmen in a late reign whose characters are very well expressed in their two mottoes, '*Prodesse quam conspice*' (that of Somers) and '*Otium cum dignitate*' (that of Halifax). Accordingly, the first was continually at work behind the curtain, drew up and prepared all those schemes and designs, which the latter still drove on; and stood out exposed to the world, to receive its praises or censures."⁷ This criticism of Somers and Halifax is not altogether untrue. Somers was of a much more retiring nature than Halifax. Halifax liked publicity and public acknowledgment of his services and, consequently, he was open to the praise or blame of the country, and

⁵ Swift, *Works*, vol. ii. p. 30.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 44.

⁷ *Ibid.* vol. xv. p. 331.

⁸ *Ibid.* vol. vi. pp. 162, 163.

he received his full share of each. At his magnificent house, which is now the British Museum, a variety of foreigners and distinguished people met.⁸ He lived in style and dignity and entertained a great deal. His vivacity, his good taste and his captivating manners, all helped to make him a charming host, whose hospitality many were delighted to enjoy. Besides books he made a fine collection of prints, medals and coins. These were sold in 1740, and his collection of manuscripts relating to public affairs in 1760.

Although sitting on opposite sides of the House there was a bond of friendship between Harley and Montagu. They had been friends in their youth and they remained lifelong friends in private life. There was even a common political bond; both earnestly desired religious toleration, both were keenly interested in the finances of the country. But each was bound closely to his party, so their union could never be a public one; indeed Halifax ultimately became a member of the ministry which impeached his friend. But there is good reason to believe that during the latter part of Harley's official life there was a serious scheme between him and Halifax for a union of the moderate of the Whig party and a small number of Tories on whom Harley could rely.⁹ Halifax might justly be called one of the moderate Whigs; he was loyal to his party but he was not so aggressively Whig as Wharton, Sunderland and Russell.

The age in which Halifax and his colleagues of the Junto lived is a peculiarly interesting one to study because in it one sees the real beginnings of our own age. The reign of William III. witnessed a great internal change and the birth of many new institutions, the Army, the Bank and the National Debt. The old state of things was gone for ever, the new institutions were to take root. The reign

⁸ *Memoirs of Duchess of Marlborough*, vol. ii. p. 12.

⁹ See Harley by E. S. Roscoe.

of Anne witnessed the settlement of one of those larger internal questions concerning the relationship between Scotland and England. To quote an eminent historian,¹⁰ "When Anne had been peaceably succeeded by George I. a most comprehensive settlement of all affairs which came under the head of policy had been reached. Not only was dynastic policy at an end but it had been abandoned with full conservation of monarchical government, so that a dynasty had begun to reign to which the 18th and 19th centuries were to belong. The two parts of Britain had also been united in a manner which was to prove permanent. . . . For the first time Protestant Powers had taken the lead in a great settlement of Europe."

The period of growth was at an end, British policy was henceforth fixed and permanent. The reign of Anne finished the work which William had begun, and which owing to death he had been unable to complete. Marlborough was in a way the disciple of William and carried on his policy. The Irish problem, it is true, proved too difficult for William and Anne to settle; it was left to a later period. The union with Scotland was achieved, and achieved successfully. It prospered because England had an invaluable privilege to offer the Scotch, the free admission into the commerce of a great Trade Empire.

In letters, in the life of the day, journalism began to play an important part; commerce was growing to be a large factor in the life of the nation and the finances of the realm were, for the first time, put on to a sure and practical basis. For this important step in the progress of the nation, the financial settlement, England is indebted to Halifax. His name may be forgotten among the minor poets, although according to the standard of his age his achievements in that direction were not to be despised; but as a financier he achieved permanent distinction. If a reminder of his genius is necessary one need do no more than recall the foundation of the Bank of England.

¹⁰ Seeley, *Growth of British Policy*.



CHARLES SPENCER.

CHARLES SPENCER.

CHARLES SPENCER, afterwards Earl of Sunderland, whom we consider last, was the youngest member of the Junto. To that body he was, perhaps, a necessity rather than an acquisition. Through his insolent temper and tortuous politics he often endangered the safety of his party and even his colleagues were exasperated at his behaviour.

He was son of Robert, the great Earl of Sunderland, who held so prominent a position during the reigns of Charles II., James II. and William III. Robert Sunderland's one object all through the turnings of his long career had been to be himself great, rich and safe. To secure his own safety he had wavered from one opinion to another, from one principle to another, and from one faction to another faction. So far as he could be said to have convictions they were Whiggish. By careful manœuvring he had carried himself unhurt through all the vicissitudes of his day. Very different was his son, Charles Spencer; his only son after the death of his eldest son in 1688, who succeeded him as Earl of Sunderland. There was no question as to which party he belonged. He was a Whig unhappily for the Whig party, but his Whiggism was of a very different character to that of his father. It was no mere wavering inclination towards one party; it was a violent and domineering passion. Ardent it was, but unfortunately it was a Whiggism corrupt and narrow, a Whiggism which he carried almost to the

verge of Republicanism, a Whiggism which, to his party, was little better than a degraded form of Toryism. Robert Spencer, the father, had been an intriguer, and Charles Spencer, the son, was an intriguer after him; only there again there was a vital difference in the nature of their intrigue. Where the father cringed and crept, the son raged and stormed, regardless of whom he might hurt or even trample underfoot. Charles Spencer had a large fund of courage and a large fund of ambition, but it was a personal, selfish ambition rather than a patriotic one. His politics were of a purely party character; his horizon reached no further than party triumphs and party defeats; there was no lofty aspiration, no nobility about his politics as there was about that of Somers. He was indifferent honest; no qualms of conscience troubled him if to secure his end he must needs abandon principles or injure a friend. He was a man whom no one, unless of the same stamp, could accept as colleague without repugnance; and his rough insolence, and arrogant priggishness made him particularly obnoxious to Queen Anne, in whose presence, according to Dartmouth¹ "he amused himself by deriding royalty." Notoriously disagreeable, he was at the same time unquestionably clever. Already in 1688, at the early age of 14, Evelyn remarked that he was a youth of extraordinary hopes, very learned for his age and ingenious.² He showed a great love of books when a boy, and to collect them was his favourite hobby all through life. When 19, he made a beginning which ultimately formed a library of no mean size and repute. He had a considerable knowledge of ancient literature and his imagination was fed and fascinated by the ideas of liberty which he found in the Latin poets. The one danger to liberty, as it appeared to him, looking through their glasses, was to be feared from monarchy. He wished to see the prerogatives enjoyed by the Sovereign given to a select few of the nobility; later on in his career he even

¹ Burnet.

² *Diary*, August 16th.

attempted to realize this ideal.* With such views, openly proclaimed, it can easily be believed that he was disliked by the Queen. Added to his youthful love of books and learning his moral character gave great promise for the future; instead of following the youth of the period and spending both time and money on horse-racing, betting at cock-fights or following attractive actresses, he was ever to be found in pursuit of old editions of the classics, such as the Virgil of Zarottus for which he gave £46.³ No wonder that great hopes were raised for the career of such a youth, who "in person was favoured by nature, in intellect was considerably above the average, and who had a sedateness above his years. Even the most observant men of his time failed to detect the vices which lay concealed under this early show of wisdom and dignity." His love of books remained, but this quiet hobby did not prevent him from growing into the most rudely insolent Whig of his time,⁴ a constant danger to his party.

Born in 1674, Charles Spencer was the second son of Robert, second Earl of Sunderland, by Lady Anne Digby, who was the youngest daughter of George, second Earl of Bristol. The eldest son died in 1688 when Charles became Lord Spencer.

In 1688, with wife and children, Lord Sunderland fled to Holland. During the period of general confusion which followed the flight of James, Sunderland made his escape. It was none too soon. He was known to be guilty of many crimes but few knew that he had voted for the prosecution of the seven Bishops, that he had sat in the High Commission, that he had even turned, or pretended to turn, Romanist. The Whigs hated him for the knowledge that

* *Post*, p. 186.

³ Evelyn saw many of these old editions of Tully, Statius, Virgil, etc., in 1699. Nichol, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i. p. 90.

⁴ Lord Sunderland was always a violent Whig, very violent in the House of Commons during his father's lifetime and continued so in the House of Lords after his death." *Wentworth Papers*, ed. 1883, p. 135.

he had served James and his government, the Jacobites hated him for the knowledge that by his base treachery he had helped to overthrow James and the Stuart dynasty. He was wise to fly from England where his life was not safe for a day.* In banishment Sunderland again changed his religion, made a humble apology for his behaviour and begged to be allowed to return to his country house at Althorpe. It was not until the Act of Grace had been taken up to the Lords that he felt it safe to venture once more on English soil. He returned, and with his irresistible manners and his power of fascination he even won some measure of influence over William, to whom he promised faithful service. When in Holland with his parents Charles Spencer had as tutor Charles Trimnell (afterwards Bishop of Winchester) and with him studied the laws and religion of the Dutch. In 1691 they were back at Althorpe and two years later Charles Spencer had begun to form the library, which he hoped to make one of the finest in the country. He travelled about England picking up books, very often exceedingly rare ones.⁵ By 1699 he is said to have had "an incomparable library, wherein, among other rare books, were several that were printed at the first invention of that wonderful art, in particular Tully's 'Offices' and a Homer, and Suidas almost as ancient."⁶

It was in the year 1695, at the age of 21, that Spencer first entered public life, when he took his seat in the Commons as member for Tiverton.⁷ He continued to represent

* See Macaulay, *History of England*.

⁵ In 1695 he bought Sir Charles Scarborough's mathematical collection.

⁶ Evelyn writes this; he saw the library in 1699.

⁷ Macaulay, vol. v. p. 6. In the *Atterbury Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 133, the following remarks give the impression he made: "He was accomplished, possessed of much literary taste, a lover of books, a patron of authors and apparently in every way gifted so as to ensure for himself a brilliant career; nevertheless there could be little doubt that his ideas of government were based on classical recollections rather than on a study of the English Constitution. He went with the Whigs in all their experiments on Church and State, but was too thoroughly an aristocrat to forget the privileges of rank." December 31st.

that borough until 1702, when, on the death of his father, he was called up to the House of Lords. During his first two sessions he seems to have proved himself nothing more than a decided Whig, who supported his party with zeal. But he aired his Republican views from the beginning. His favourite cry was "Down with the Lords"; and he would often, according to Swift, "among his familiar friends refuse the title of 'Lord,' swear he would never be called otherwise than 'Charles Spencer,' and hoped to see the day when there should not be a peer in England."⁸ He professed to desire the exclusion of the Lords from all questions of importance, and yet as soon as he himself had the chance of entering the Upper House he did so, and conducted himself in anything but a moderate way. In 1695 he had married Lady Arabella Cavendish, fifth daughter of the second Duke of Newcastle. Their married life was cut short by her death three years later, and it was at this point that a step was taken which turned out to be one of very great importance to the Whig party. It was proposed, largely due to Godolphin, that he should marry the Lady Anne, second daughter of the Earl of Marlborough. Sunderland, Spencer's father, was very anxious for the marriage; he and Marlborough had long been friends, friends intimate and helpful to each other, and to see his son united to the Lady Anne was, perhaps, his greatest wish now that his life was drawing to a close. He wrote to Mrs. Boscawen, Godolphin's sister, through whose agency he first of all tried to achieve it, "If I see him so settled I shall desire nothing more in this world but to die in peace, if it please God. I must add this, that if he can be thus happy, he will be governed in everything public and private, by Lord Marlborough. I have particularly talked to him of that, and he is sensible how advantageous it will be to him to be so."⁹

⁸ Swift, *Works*, vol. v. p. 28. *Four Last Years of the Queen.*

⁹ *Marlborough Papers.* Lord Sunderland to Mrs. Boscawen.

The parents of the lady in question were not, however, so anxious for the marriage. The Countess of Marlborough, accustomed to flattery and polished manners, did not consider him a suitable son-in-law. Marlborough himself disliked the Republicanism and violence already displayed by Spencer. Neither of them urged the matter. The Sunderlands persisted and Lady Marlborough soon gave way. She was much less hostile to Whiggism than her husband, and seeing that the charms of her daughter had captured the young Spencer,¹⁰ she joined the promoters of the match and used her power to win her husband over to their way of thinking. Reluctantly he consented, but with strong apprehensions that his new son-in-law was not so tractable as his father was inclined to think. He was right; his fears were soon to be realized. The marriage was one which was to bring much trouble to both parties. They were married in January, 1700, the ceremony taking place at St. Albans. Two years later Spencer took his seat in the House of Lords as successor to his father¹ and at this period the importance of his political life may be said to have begun.

And yet 1702 was the year which saw the death of William III., the Whig King, and the accession of Anne, whose sympathies were entirely with the Tories. In the Parliament of 1702 they found themselves in a majority of two to one.² With the Sovereign's support they might have kept this ascendancy if it had not been for the disastrous policy of introducing the Bill against Occasional Conformity. They lost the confidence of the nation by their endeavour to force conformatity by tacking their Bill to a Bill for Supply.³ But in opposition, as well as in power (and therein, perhaps, lies the secret of the Junto's success), the activity of the Junto was unresting. In the House of Lords, too, the Whigs were the stronger party. They did not relax their energy, realiz-

¹⁰ For this marriage see Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. i. chap. 7.

¹ October 27th, 1702. Luttrell, vol. v. p. 230.

² W. F. Lord, *Queen Anne*, p. 78.

³ See page 45.

ing that it would not be long before they once more gained power. They observed the tactics of the Tories with intelligent interest, and they watched, perhaps, even more closely the change in the attitude of Marlborough and Godolphin, the great Tory ministers. At the accession of Queen Anne, the Marlboroughs were in high favour; she gave responsible places in the Royal Household to the Duchess and very high offices in the State to the Duke. Godolphin, too, was favoured; he was appointed Lord High Treasurer, which corresponded to the position of Prime Minister at the present day. Marlborough and Godolphin were Tories; they might even have been called "High Tories" at that time. Nevertheless they supported the war according to the plans and wishes of King William. Marlborough, indeed, to whom the late King had bequeathed his war policy, to carry on and complete, could hardly have done otherwise. But this war policy, being William's policy, was very dear to the Whigs; and Marlborough and Godolphin thereby received more support from their opponents than from their own party. This position of affairs led to a gradual change in the attitude of the two Tory Ministers. At the second introduction of the Occasional Conformity Bill they were already beginning to look to the Whigs for support⁴ and made attempts to dissuade their party friends from re-introducing the measure. In the division they voted, however, in its favour.⁵ When the Bill was brought forward for a third time, unscrupulously tacked on to the Bill of Supply, Marlborough and Godolphin gave silent votes against it. This somewhat rapid change which came over the two great ministers was highly significant. In the elections of 1705 they used their influence against the "tackers," the result being that the Whigs once more gained a majority.

Sunderland gave the Queen and the Duchess an early taste of his roughness and his disregard of their feelings.

⁴ Stanhope, vol. i. p. 123.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 124.

One of his first acts as a peer was to oppose the granting of an annuity on the Prince. In 1702, at the opening of the Session, the question was introduced as one of great importance by a message from the Queen, urging that further provision be made for her husband, should he survive her. In Committee a member of the Lower House, Mr. Howe, voted a grant of the enormous sum of £100,000 per annum.⁶ The extravagance of this proposal will be understood when it is known to be double the sum any Queen of England ever had in jointure. Dread of offending the Queen allowed it to pass the Commons. Very different was its reception in the Upper House. The Lords stoutly opposed it, but the Court party and Marlborough prevailed in spite of them. The Queen's great gratitude to Marlborough for the victory is seen in a letter to the Duchess: "I am sure the Prince's Bill, passing after so much struggle, is wholly owing to the pains you and Mr. Freeman have taken, and I ought to say a great deal to both of you in return, but neither words nor actions can ever express the true sense Mr. Morley and I have of your sincere kindness on this and all other occasions; and therefore I will not say any more on this subject, but that to my last moment your dear unfortunate, faithful Morley will be most passionately and tenderly yours."⁷

This letter shows forth the close and affectionate relationship between the Queen and the Duchess. "Dear Mrs. Freeman" was the Lady Marlborough, to the Queen; the Duchess likewise addressing the Queen as "dear Mrs. Morley." They had been friends of the closest intimacy before the Queen's accession and this connection continued during the first years of her reign and was only broken by the Duchess obviously going over to the side of the Whigs.

In the Upper House Sunderland was one of the Lords who stoutly opposed the Bill granting an annuity to Prince George. Much to the chagrin and disgust of his parents-

⁶ Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. i. p. 209. Wyen, vol. i. p. 145.

⁷ Coxe, *ut supra*, vol. i. p. 210.

in-law he not only voted against, but signed a protest.⁸ The imperious hot-tempered Duchess took great offence at his behaviour, and the Queen naturally took a very great dislike to the bold young Lord who took such a decided stand against her husband. This incident, perhaps, sealed the dislike for him which the Queen could never throw off.⁹ It also, possibly, laid the seed of alienation between the Queen and her favourite, the Duchess. Through the amiable efforts of her daughter, the Lady Sunderland, the impetuous Duchess was reconciled to her son-in-law and she forgot her irritation. Sunderland was, after all, the Duchess' son-in-law and she, eager for distinction and power, was equally anxious to obtain the same for him. Through her efforts and those of Godolphin, Sunderland, the youngest member of the Junto, was the first to attain office under Anne. The war, the Whig policy, as we have seen, was supported by Marlborough and Godolphin. This fact put the Tory ministers in an awkward position. Godolphin gradually came to realize that the existence of the Government and the continuance of the war depended upon the Whigs; they alone supported the war and passed votes of supply: the Whigs alone protected the country from religious intolerance and political chaos. Their goodwill must be preserved or else their support would be withdrawn and in order to achieve this end the Whigs must be given a share in the Government. This was the fact that stared Godolphin in the face and which he, in vain, tried to impress upon Marlborough. He approached Marlborough through the Duchess: "As to what you say of the Whigs I am to learn that till they have the power in their hands they will be against everything that may be an assistance to the Queen and the Government."¹⁰

⁸ Signed also by Wharton and Orford. Thorold Rogers, *Protests of the Lords*, vol. i. p. 163.

⁹ Wyon, vol. i. p. 146. Stanhope, vol. i. p. 89.

¹⁰ Godolphin to Duchess, January 14th, 1706-1707.

Not until the year 1705 did Marlborough begin to realize the need of Whig support. He then began to see that the war would terminate unless a Whig was placed in the Cabinet.¹ The Whigs clamoured for office, and office for the Earl of Sunderland seemed to be their one desire.² As son-in-law to Marlborough they thought if once in office he would gain considerable influence for their party, and make way for other Whigs to follow. They proposed him as Secretary for State and would take no refusal. Of all the Whigs, Sunderland was, perhaps, the least likely to be acceptable. Godolphin had little esteem for him and Marlborough disliked his rough politics and feared the opposition of the Queen, whose antipathy for him was so apparent. His faults were already to some extent known, but it must be remembered that at this date his capacity in office had not been tested. In 1705, however, he had been sent as envoy extraordinary to Vienna on the accession of Joseph I. This appointment had been pressed by the Whig leaders, who intended it to be merely an introductory step to a place of trust in the State. They had already, with the help of the Duchess, tried to secure for him the post of Comptroller of the Household, but owing to firm opposition from Marlborough, had failed.³ At Vienna, the negotiations he had to carry through were of the highest importance; he had to arrange a difference between the Emperor and the Hungarians.⁴ He displayed diplomatic skill, but he looked upon his mission with no seriousness; he desired to be back in the midst of the political strife in London, and only two months after his departure he wrote home to Godolphin that

¹ October 14th, 1706. Marlborough writes to Duchess (the Whigs were determined to oppose the Government if Sunderland was not appointed): "I see no remedy but patience, for if it were not God's pleasure to punish us for our sins this way he would never suffer wise men to be so unreasonable; for it is certainly the part of madmen to hurt oneself in order to be revenged of others, especially when they are our best of friends."

² Private Correspondence of the Duchess, xxvii.

³ Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. ii. p. 87.

Boyer, *Annals*, vol. iv. p. 94.

he would rather be buried alive than stay any longer in Vienna.⁵ This was hardly the attitude for one about to take high office: and yet Godolphin felt it was necessary to put Sunderland into the Cabinet. He urged this point upon Marlborough who finally gave way. The Queen's dislike for the man was the next obstacle. Herein the Duchess proved useful. She, eager to see her son-in-law promoted, exerted all her influence. The moment, too, for urging the appointment was not unfavourable. For the first time, in 1705, was the Queen displeased with the Tories, for they had tried, during the previous parliamentary session, to establish her successor in England. She began to realize, too, that it was necessary for the safety of the Government to grant some share to the Whigs. But why admit the very man she most abhorred? She would not consent to his promotion and offered a firm refusal; she declared the Whigs' demand unreasonable and Sunderland's temper insufferable. The Marlboroughs had, at the beginning of her reign, frequently cautioned her against placing herself in the hands of a party. Was it not, argued the Queen, a strong proof that she was in the hands of a party, being forced to choose for her servants men whom she disliked? "Why," she wrote to Godolphin, "for God's sake, must I, who have no interest, no end, no thought but for the good of my country, be made so miserable as to be brought into the power of one set of men."⁶ The Queen had plenty of character and she knew her own mind; she was resolved to resist the appointment of Sunderland as long as she possibly could. She was in an extremely difficult position, she implored Godolphin to save her from it; this by no means simplified Godolphin's position, for the Whigs attacked him and accused him of insincerity in not giving them what they demanded.⁷ How

⁵ Add. MSS. 28,056, f. 321. Brit. Mus.

⁶ Anne to Godolphin, August 30th, 1706. Coxe, *Marlborough*, September 10th.

⁷ *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 7.

was the situation to be saved? Godolphin adopted the measure of threatening to resign the White Staff.⁸ "I came this moment from opening and reading the letter which your Majesty gave yourself the trouble to write to me last night. It gives me all the grief and despair imaginable, to find that your Majesty shows inclination to have me continue in your service, and yet will make it impossible for me to do so. I shall not, therefore, trouble your Majesty with fruitless repetitions of reasons and arguments. I cannot struggle against the difficulties of your Majesty's business and yourself at the same time; but I can keep my word to your Majesty. . . . I have worn out my health, and almost my life, in the service of the Crown. I have served your Majesty faithfully to the best of my understanding, without any advantage to myself except the honour of doing so, or without expecting any other favour than to end the small remainder of my days in liberty and quiet."⁹

The Queen was seriously embarrassed. She could not lose him, who was a tried and apparently faithful servant; her only other course was to admit Sunderland. But she remained firm, even though the Duchess pleaded in his favour. Between these two alternatives the Queen wavered until Marlborough's return to England. She tried to conciliate both parties by offering to create Sunderland a Privy Councillor with a pension. This alternative was treated with scorn by the Whigs; Sunderland rejected the offer, and Somers and Halifax persisted. In a letter to the Duchess, Sunderland expressed their view: "Lord Sunderland, Lord Halifax and I have talked very fully over all this matter, and we are come to our last resolution in it, that is, what other things have been promised must be done or we and the Lord Treasurer must have nothing more to do together about business."¹⁰ But Marlborough had pledged himself to secure the post for his son-in-law, in return

⁸ Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. iii. p. 92.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 93.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* vol. iii. p. 94.

receiving the necessary support of the Whigs to carry on the war. The Queen could no longer hold out when both Godolphin and Marlborough were firm. She was obliged to reluctantly yield and to see the man who was intolerable to her created Secretary of State, December 3, 1706.¹¹ The Whigs were satisfied for the time but the appointment was not destined to bring peace to the Queen or to the political world. In spite of his unquestionable ability, his impetuosity and his ungovernable temper made him a thorn in the side of even his own party. Somers, for whom Sunderland had the greatest esteem and to whose word he would alone pay attention, was fearful lest he should injure his party more than help it.

Sunderland's entry into the Cabinet was highly significant. It marked a distinct change in the ministry from Tory to Whig. The important step of admitting Sunderland to office having been taken, other promotions rapidly followed. Chiefs of the Tory party such as the Duke of Buckingham and the Earls of Nottingham, Rochester and Jersey, Lord Gower and Sir George Rooke were removed from the Privy Council. The Administration was established on a Whig basis and Harley and St. John were the only Tories of any note who retained positions of responsibility. It also marked a distinct change at Court. The Duchess' staunch support of the Whigs in their desire to push Sunderland into office alienated her from the Queen. The fact of the matter was that the Duchess had changed her political views, she was no longer a Tory, and she wished to make the Queen follow her. The Queen was and always would remain a Tory. This difference of political opinion menaced the close friendship which had hitherto existed between the Queen and the Duchess.

The Duchess, quite innocently, had promoted a cousin of her own, who was poor and in need, to a place of trust in the Household. She never for one moment thought it would

¹¹ Ranke, vol. v. p. 326. Coxe, *ut supra*, vol. iii. p. 132. Boyer, *Annals*.

work towards her own dismissal. This woman, Abigail Hill, was of quiet, pleasant manners, a great contrast to her cousin, the stormy Duchess. She became Mrs. Masham, marrying a gentleman of the Household, the Queen herself being present at the ceremony. A cousin also of Robert Harley, Mrs. Masham was of decided Tory conviction and of the High Church party; she became a favourite with Anne, and as she grew in favour the Duchess was superseded. The fact that Sunderland, who was making himself intolerable to the Queen, was son-in-law to the Duchess, did not help matters.

This connection of Anne with Mrs. Masham was of great importance. Through her as medium, Harley strengthened his position with the Queen; this growing intimacy roused the jealousy of Marlborough and Godolphin who determined to get Harley dismissed from office. This was achieved with no great difficulty; they placed their resignations in the Queen's hands. She could not for a moment think of losing Marlborough; Harley must therefore go. A large Whig majority in the elections and the death of her husband filled the Queen's cup of bitterness. But she remained true to her Tory and High Church principles even though the Tories had proved themselves so distasteful to her. It required a woman of no small amount of courage and constancy to endure so great trials. Time after time she was put at the mercy of the great men around her, but she held her ground firmly. She was not a weak woman. To follow her through her career and see how she rose above difficulties and met opposition is enough to contradict this view at the outset. The appointment of two high Tories as bishops without consulting her ministers was an early assertion of her independence and her rights. "I cannot think my having nominated Sir W. Dawes and Dr. Blackhill to be bishops is any breach, they being worthy men; and all the clamour that is raised against them proceeds only from the malice of the Whigs."¹ The will of the Queen was, in fact,

¹ Coxo, *Marlborough*, vol. iii. p. 371.

the main factor in determining important changes of policy. By her own will she made and unmade ministers.² She had a great belief in the importance of the prerogative and this she was determined to make clear to the strong characters around her. Even the strongest of them felt her influence. Queen Anne was a woman of character as well as of personal dignity, and until that is realized it is difficult to understand the intricacies of her reign.

The moment Sunderland entered the Cabinet troubles began: his promotion was certainly not calculated to gain popularity for the Whig party. He raised contentions amongst the nobility, he showed an indifference to character in those whom he took as associates; he began to dictate to the Queen; he showed himself harsh, ungovernable and headstrong. In 1708 he vexed Marlborough and Godolphin by his tactless zeal in interfering in the Scotch elections.³ He accused Harley of having been privy to the crimes of his secretary Gregg, and at the conference held to consider the dismissal of Mrs. Masham, who, together with Harley, was intriguing and seeking to undermine the Whig party at Court, he was violent and overbearing. He supported his father-in-law in urging that the Queen be asked to remove Mrs. Masham, but Somers, with his usual moderation, opposed the course as without precedent, and he was supported by Godolphin and the other Whig leaders. Sunderland did not hesitate to differ openly in Parliament from his senior and more steady colleagues, of whose lukewarmness he complained to the Duchess. His behaviour, indeed, roused the Queen and the High Church party to seek steps to procure his removal from office.⁴ The Whigs, to their disgust, felt that although in some ways extremely useful to them, he was certainly gaining for them discredit and unpopularity. What, perhaps, brought things

² Seeley, *Political Science*.

³ Burnet, vol. v. p. 389. Wyon, vol. ii. p. 88.

⁴ Atterbury, *Memoirs*.

to a crisis was his attitude in the affair of Dr. Sacheverell. When this man's injudicious sermons were brought before the Cabinet, the wiser members, such as Somers, advocated that the sermons should be passed over. Sunderland, however, moved they should be brought to the knowledge of the legislature with a view to the impeachment of the offender.⁵ Unfortunately for his party his proposal was carried; Dr. Sacheverell was impeached and sentenced. The doom of the Whig Cabinet was imminent. The High Church party, highly indignant at the treatment of Dr. Sacheverell, were bent on Sunderland's dismissal. Harley and his friends saw that their time to strike had come. The significance of the trial was to be seen in the intense feeling in favour of Sacheverell which really amounted to a condemnation of the principles of 1688. It also showed the very great power of the Church. Robert Walpole wrote to Marlborough, June 6, 1710: "I think our affairs at home in a most unaccountable situation. Lord Sunderland, it is agreed by all, is to be removed and by none endeavoured to be saved. I don't know what this means, but I am sure it must end in the dissolution of this Parliament and in the destruction of the Whigs. The saving Lord Sunderland deserves the utmost industry, which alone can preserve the Parliament upon which the Whigs entirely depend, and I am afraid your Grace has no surer friend."

Walpole was right in his predictions. Even his colleagues were bound to acknowledge that Sunderland had done them more harm than good. Marlborough, however, urged that at any rate his removal should be deferred until the end of the campaign.⁶ He sent a letter to Godolphin to be shown to the Queen urging that the step might be postponed. The Whig ministers made a last attempt to keep him in office, realizing that his removal would mean their loss of power. A conference was held at Devonshire House⁷

⁵ Coxe, *ut supra*, vol. v. p. 124. Wyon, vol. ii. p. 159.

⁶ Marlborough, *Conduct*, p. 253. ⁷ Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. v. p. 263.

to protest, but too late. Anne, who had hesitated taking such a bold step as to dismiss one of the all-powerful Junto, was determined to hesitate no longer. She had already drawn up the form of dismissal commanding him to deliver up his seals and had warned Marlborough and Godolphin that should they resign they alone would be responsible for any consequence to the public. "If he and you (writing to Godolphin) should do so wrong a thing, at any time, as to desert my service, what confusion might happen might lie at your door, and you alone would be answerable, and nobody else."

There being no actual charge against Sunderland Anne offered him a pension of £3,000. This he haughtily and indignantly refused, pointing out "if he could not have the honour of serving his country he certainly would not plunder it."⁸

Although to some extent anticipated the Whigs felt it a slap in the face. The Queen had yet again shewn that she would not be treated by her ministers as they chose, but that she demanded respect and obedience. "We are all," wrote Robert Walpole to Lord Townshend, "under the greatest consternation at the removal of Lord Sunderland which tho' expected when the blow was struck gave the greatest alarm to all the town (June 16)." Horace Walpole wrote from the Hague: "The consternation that the removal of Lord Sunderland occasions here is as great as it can possibly be at London (July 1)." Swift wrote: "The circumstances of the Earl of Sunderland's removal, and the reasons alleged, are known enough. His ungovernable temper had ever swayed him to fail in his respects to Her Majesty's person."⁹

⁸ For dismissal of Sunderland see: Burnet, vol. vi. p. 9. Stanhope, vol. ii. p. 157. Lecky, vol. i. p. 59. Somerville, p. 412. Marlborough, *Conduct*, p. 257. Boyer, vol. ix. pp. 228-230. Luttrell, vol. vi. p. 594. Wyon, vol. ii. p. 209.

⁹ Swift, *Works*, vol. iii. p. 178. *Changes in Queen's Ministry*.

The Whigs' time of power in office was at an end. What had, some eighteen months before, been an entirely Whig Cabinet became through the elections of November, 1710, an entirely Tory one. The Tory party retained the majority and exercised almost undisputed power during the last four years of Anne's reign. The anticipation that Sunderland's fall would be speedily followed by Godolphin's was soon realized. The Queen was tired of dietation from the Whigs; Godolphin, and even Marlborough, who had served her so loyally abroad, were ignominiously dismissed. The fall of the Marlboroughs took place in 1712; the haughty Duchess was disgraced, and had to leave her apartments at St. James' Palace. Lady Sunderland ceased to be Lady of the Bedchamber. A new government was formed under Harley and St. John. The extremists of the new Government attacked the retiring administration, and against Sunderland many darts were thrown. He was blamed for bringing over the Palatines. The Act of Naturalization, which induced herds of homeless aliens to come to England had been a pet scheme of his, and had unmistakably proved a very mischievous one. The Tories had witnessed with indignation this influx of foreigners, which swelled the ranks of pauperism, and even threatened the Church of England. The extreme Tories considered this ample ground upon which to impeach Sunderland; but Harley, with his usual disinclination to be extreme on any point, with his usual caution and love of procrastination, contrived to stifle the enquiry.¹⁰

During these years in opposition, Sunderland's character as an intriguer was fully displayed. He joined a small clique of Tories formed by Nottingham in opposition to the ministry; in 1711, when Nottingham urged a motion against the proposed peace, Sunderland supported him;¹¹ while in return Sunderland moved the introduction of the Ocea-

¹⁰ Wyon, vol. ii. p. 281.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 337.

sional Conformity Bill directed against his own friends, the Dissenters. He voted in favour of dissolving the Union with Scotland if some measure could be found to secure the Protestant Succession¹ and “if it had not the good results expected.” Harley failed to understand by what legal power the Union, which had been enacted by two distinct Parliaments, could be dissolved, whereupon Sunderland and Harley interchanged recriminating personalities.²

Fortunately for the Whigs they were saved from the disrepute which the introduction of a Bill to dissolve the Union, that Union for which the Junto, and Sunderland himself, had worked so hard, would have brought them. The House divided, an equal number of Lords were for and against the motion; proxies being counted, the thin majority of five negatived the Bill. It was a narrow escape.³

After the signing of the Peace of Utrecht in March, 1713, the one question which occupied all statesmen alike was the question of the Succession. With anxious eyes the nation watched the chances. The state of the Queen’s health urged no delay in the matter. All the leading Tories were in correspondence with the Pretender, all the leading Whigs were in constant communication with the Court of Hanover. The Junto were determined to secure the cause of the Revolution, for which they had worked so hard; they were bent on the continuation of constitutional government. They, partly, no doubt, through real devotion to the principles of 1688, but also largely because they saw no chance of office for any of them during the Queen’s lifetime, or after it, should the Pretender succeed, threw all their weight into the scale of the House of Hanover. Sunderland proved useful to his party at this juncture. He was in constant touch with the Court of Hanover and their agents in England and Holland. He rendered great service to the House of Han-

¹ Wyon, vol. ii. p. 454.

² *Parl. Hist.* vol. vi. pp. 1219-1220.

³ Mahon, vol. i. p. 39.

over, and he looked for his reward. In 1706, on his return from Vienna, he had passed through Hanover and had his first interview with his future Sovereign, and afterwards had written to the Elector assuring him of his loyal attachment.⁴ In 1713⁵ he was consulted, together with Somers, Halifax and Townshend as to the course to be pursued at the Queen's death. Sunderland's advice was that the Electoral Prince should at once be sent from the Hague to England where he could appear without the consent of Parliament, being a peer of the realm. Throughout the year he continued to urge expedition in carrying this out; and also urged the supply of money for the use of the Whigs in the coming elections. He and the Duke of Argyll did their utmost to reconcile the Hanoverian Tories and the Whigs. According to Macpherson,⁶ Bothmar declared when he arrived in London that Sunderland's zeal for, and devotion to, the cause of George I. was greater than that of any other man.

But in spite of so much hard work for the cause, the Succession still hung in the balance. Bolingbroke, Secretary of State,⁷ whose ambition knew no bounds, was sure of office if James III. could be placed upon the throne. The Pretender had a good many supporters, but he would have secured a great many more if he had been content to change, or even make a pretence of changing, his religion. In that event there is little doubt that the Tory party would have accepted him as King. But the Pretender played his hand badly, he remained rigidly and narrowly Romanist. When this fact was realized the Tory split was the result. Bolingbroke was unscrupulous and prepared to go any length to attain his end. The cautious Harley hesitated to follow him; refused to support the Schism Act and was conse-

⁴ Macpherson, *Original Papers*, 1775, vol. ii. p. 36.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 475.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 640.

⁷ St. John had been raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Bolingbroke, July, 1712.

quently dismissed.⁸ Bolingbroke, as chief minister to Anne, tried to form a Cabinet of Jacobites, but the sudden illness and death of Anne ruined his plans. Hardly could the most resolute action have saved the situation, even if the means of action had been ready to his hand. The Whigs, however, were more fortunately situated and struck their blow. The Elector became King of England and Bolingbroke's ambition was foiled.

Sunderland, who expected certain reward for his services under the new King, saw, with disgust, that his name was omitted from the list of Lord Justices. "It was a surprise to me, and I fancy will not be less so to himself, not to see my Lord Wharton's name in the list; and my Lord Sunderland looked very pale when the names were read."⁹ All the Junto were put in the Privy Council but Sunderland, who was only named Lord Lieutenant of Ireland,¹⁰ an appointment which in his eyes amounted to nothing but a banishment from England. He was disgusted at the apparent slight he had received, and, in consequence, took practically no part in the Government; during the years 1714-1717 his name hardly ever appears in the transactions of the Upper House.

"We are as full in the House of Commons as at any time, we are gaping and staring to see who is to rule us. The Whigs think they shall engross all. We think we shall have our share." So wrote Lewis to Swift in August, 1714.

⁸ Bolingbroke and Harley had slowly drifted apart. They were entirely opposite natures, and could not co-operate. Bolingbroke, active and decisive, plunged fearlessly into intrigue; Harley, ever cautious and lacking in self-confidence, would always postpone a decision as long as possible. As early as 1711 Bolingbroke wrote: "We who are reputed to be in Mr. Harley's intimacy have few opportunities of seeing him, and none of talking freely with him. As he is the only true channel through which the Queen's pleasure is conveyed to us, there is and must be a perfect stagnation till he is pleased to open himself and set the water flowing." Mahon, vol. i. p. 34.

⁹ *Wentworth Papers*, p. 409.

¹⁰ Boyer, *Political State*. Coxe, *Marlborough*, vol. viii. p. 266.

The Whigs did think they would "engross all." Given office and power by the new King, the new ministry was a triumph for their party. Bolingbroke was succeeded by Townshend as Secretary of State. Townshend had been recommended by Bothmar as a suitable person and was appointed, much to Sunderland's chagrin.¹ Bolingbroke, deeply mortified, nevertheless took his dismissal philosophically, but he was wounded to see the utter defeat of his party. "To be removed was neither matter of surprise nor of concern to me. But the manner of my removal" (the seals were taken from him and the doors of his office locked) "shocked me for at least two minutes. . . . I am not in the least intimidated from any consideration of the Whig malice and power; but the grief of my soul is this, I see plainly that the Tory party is gone."²

He was to a great extent right. The Whigs were all-powerful. The new Sovereign was acceptable to them, he thoroughly trusted his ministers. George's one idea seemed to be that the Tory party were pledged to Jacobitism and that the only course for him to pursue, if he wished to retain the throne, was to throw himself entirely into the hands of the party which had placed him where he was. His reign was, therefore, the undisturbed rule of the Whigs. The system of party government, which had gradually been taking root during the two former reigns, now became a recognized principle of the English Constitution.

In the elections of 1715 the Whigs gained one victory after another. Three members of the Junto, however, Somers, Halifax and Wharton, were not destined to see much more than the successful establishment of the Protestant King with a powerful Whig ministry around him. The year 1715 saw the deaths of Halifax and Wharton, the following year Somers passed away. Russell lived on till 1727, but during the reign of George I. he had quitted the

¹ Macpherson, vol. ii. p. 650.

² *Ibid.* p. 651.

field of political life. Sunderland alone (and he survived till 1722) of the members of the Junto played a part, an important but an ignoble part, during the first years of the new reign.

The Whig party had completely changed its characters, nearly all the old chiefs had dropped out. Godolphin had died in 1712, Somers, Wharton and Halifax, as we have seen, were also gone. Marlborough, although he had returned to England, was not returned to power. The power was almost entirely in the hands of four men, Lord Townshend, First Secretary of State, Stanhope, Second Secretary, Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Sunderland.

Townshend, an honest but rough man, was not brilliant. He had good business qualities and he was conscientious. Stanhope had, as a general, been popular in Spain, and had displayed both skill and valour. As a politician he was fearless, almost too outspoken, at the same time he was haughty and hot tempered. Walpole, who at first had only the minor post of Paymaster, soon proved himself to be an abler man than Stanhope. In October, 1715, he was promoted to be First Lord of the Treasury.

All four were men of great ability, and it was hardly to be expected that any one of them would be content to act under another. Intrigue split the party up into factions; and factions separated from one another not so much in principle as through personal grudges. The only point, perhaps, on which they were absolutely at one was their determination to keep the Tories out of power. Certain considerations told in their favour. Firstly, throughout England the Protestant feeling ran high; secondly, they gained the support of the mercantile classes, and thirdly, they had great Parliamentary influence. In the Lords they had a majority; they controlled the Commons by adroit party administration.

To return to Sunderland. In October of 1714 he had been made a Privy Councillor; in 1715, on the death of

Wharton, he exchanged the viceroyalty for the office of Lord Privy Seal with a seat in the Cabinet; the following year he became Vice-Treasurer of Ireland for life. No longer having his wiser and more moderate colleagues of the Junto to restrain him, he plunged headlong into intrigue. Townshend was his enemy, and Townshend he was therefore determined to overthrow. The apparent security of affairs at home; the passing of the Septennial Act, which put aside the fear of an election in 1717; and the consolidated power of the Whigs, left the King free to visit Hanover. With considerable reluctance King George left the kingdom in the hands of the Prince of Wales, limiting his power as much as possible,* by conferring upon him the title of Guardian of the Realm and Lieutenant, not Regent. The King's jealousy of his son was to become an instrument of Sunderland's intrigue. The absence of the King was a likely time to damage Townshend. In the autumn of 1716 Sunderland obtained leave to go to Aix-la-Chapelle for his health. His real object was to have an interview with the King, who was in Hanover, to urge him to get rid of Walpole and Townshend and to put in their place friends of the Duke of Marlborough. Previous to his departure, Sunderland had gone so far as to meet his colleagues and to profess himself whole-heartedly loyal to them. Walpole reported these professions of faith to Stanhope :³ "Lord Sunderland talks of leaving England in a fortnight, and, to be sure, will not be long from you . . . his professions for an entire reconciliation and a perfect union are as strong as words can express and you may be sure are reciprocal. When I consider that common interest should procure sincerity among us, I am astonished to think there is reason to fear the contrary."⁴

* Cooke, vol. ii. p. 54.

³ Walpole to Stanhope, July 30th, 1716.

⁴ Cooke, vol. ii. p. 55.

Sunderland, though by no means a favourite with the King, did, through the influence of Stanhope, obtain a hearing at Gohre. He found Stanhope, through his successful negotiations with France, in high favour with King George, and so at once determined to enlist him on his side against their colleagues. He had already several supporters in England in those Whigs who were dissatisfied with the treatment which they had received—Lord Cadogan,⁵ Hampden, Lechmere and others; with these, and, if possible to secure his co-operation, with Stanhope, Sunderland began to make every attempt he could to overthrow the Cabinet of which he was still a member. There is, perhaps, some doubt as to how he won over Stanhope, and at which exact point he attained this object. Sir Robert Walpole, in his "Memoirs,"⁶ thinks Sunderland convinced Stanhope that the Cabinet secretly counteracted the conclusion of the alliance with France. Sunderland gained the confidence of the King, and found little difficulty in selecting from the numerous transactions in which Townshend had taken part some apparent instances of neglect or lack of respect. Although Townshend was known to have worked zealously for the French treaty, Sunderland influenced the King until it was alleged as a crime against Townshend that he had purposely delayed its signature. Sunderland went even further. He persuaded George I. that Townshend and Walpole were caballing with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Argyll and that their one object was to keep him, the King, out of England as long as they could. This alarm was increased by Townshend's asking the King to grant further powers to the Prince during the King's absence.⁷ The King's jealousy could not brook such suggestions, and in spite of Horace Walpole's endeavours to reconcile the inharmonious party, the dismissal of Townshend⁸ seemed the inevitable conse-

⁵ Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i. p 150.

⁶ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 179.

⁷ *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 182.

⁸ Cooke, vol. ii. p. 72.

quenee of Sunderland's intrigues. Townshend reeeived the news of his dismissal with surprise and wrath. He declined the offer of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, which the King made to him in place of the Seeretaryship of State.

His removal from office was received with an outburst of disapprobation. The majority of the Whigs were highly indignant and many of the leading Cabinet ministers sided wholly with the fallen minister. Walpole, the Duke of Devonshire and the Earl of Orford retired. Not until named Secretary of State⁹ was Sunderland's greed for office satisfied. Stanhope became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Sunderland and Stanhope were supreme, but they had weakened their party by losing men of talent whom they could not replace. Their ill-won power was not to be one of long duration.

Lord Stair wrote to James Craggs, January 14, 1717 :¹⁰
 "I look upon what had happened as the most dangerous thing could befall us, both as to the matter and to the manuer. What the devil did Lord Sunderland and Stanhope mean to make such a step without conneerting it (*i.e.*, the removal of Townshend from being Secretary of State) . . . God knows how it will end. I fear very ill . . . 'Tis a dangerous and critical juncture."

The first aim of these two ambitious men was to secure the power of their party by a eonstitutional change. Sunderland introduced his Peerage Bill.* By its agency he hoped to eurtail the power of the Prince of Wales, when he should become King; and to prevent the Hanoverians from giving peerages to foreigners. Also to make impossible a device resorted to by Harley to override the majority in the Upper House, namely, the creation of a number of new peers.

* Mahon, vol. i. p. 263.

¹⁰ Hardwicke, *State Papers*, vol. ii. p. 556.

* For Peerage Bill see *Parliamentary History*, vol. vii. pp. 590-607 ; Cooke, *History of Party*, vol. ii. p. 88 ; Coxe, *Memoirs of Sir Robert Walpole*, vol. i. p. 222 ; Cunningham, *Lives*.

The Bill provided that only six more peers, beyond the existing number of 178 could be named, and these six Sunderland was determined should be adherents of his own. This unpopular Bill passed the Lords with no difficulty; but in the Commons it received stout opposition. Walpole defeated the Bill. It was thrown out and, in consequence, he was not a member of the Cabinet when the South Sea schemers undertook to reduce the National Debt. Had the Bill been passed, representative government would have been impossible and the power of the Upper House impregnably placed in the hands of the Whig oligarchy.

Meanwhile Sunderland had advanced in power step by step. Very soon after his appointment as Secretary of State he became President of the Council¹ and finally First Lord of the Treasury.² Only at the rejection of his Peerage Bill did he realize that his position was not so secure as he had thought. Then came the death of Stanhope in February, 1721. It was a blow which destroyed the predominance of that section of the Whig party, which had rested on the personal favour of the King. The year 1721 was an ill-omened one for Sunderland. The death of his colleague was followed by an even greater and more significant event. The Stanhope Cabinet was eventually overthrown, not by the strength of its enemies, but by its fatal connection with that great financial panic, the South Sea Bubble.

Sunderland's position grew insecure. Walpole and Townshend appeared so formidable to him that he thought it wiser to divide his power and partially coalesce with them. He resigned the Presidency of the Council, but was on the same day appointed Groom of the Stole and First Gentleman of the Bedchamber. His influence with the King was still very considerable. In May, 1719, and again in 1720, he was appointed one of the Lords Justices during the King's absence; but the bursting of the South Sea Bubble proved fatal to his political supremacy.

¹ March 16th, 1718.

² Four days later.

The South Sea Company had been founded in 1711 by an Act of Parliament with the object of developing trade with Spanish America and the islands of the Pacific. It had been given the exclusive right of trading in the Pacific Ocean and along the coast of America from the Orinoco to Cape Horn. It had proved very successful; the shares were in great demand at a heavy premium. The directors became over-daring and sought to extend their operations. They promoted a great scheme for offering the Government the sum of £7,000,000 for the privilege of taking over from the Bank of England the management of the National Debt. At that time the National Debt was the cause of much agitation; it was very large and it had been borrowed at a very high rate of interest at a time when the Government security was bad. Any plan likely to reduce the Debt was welcomed with eager interest. The directors of the Company hoped to recoup themselves by persuading the holders of the State loans to exchange them for new stock of the South Sea Company which would thus bring in a capital large enough to develop its trade all over the world.* Sunderland and Stanhope, on whose minds the National Debt weighed heavily, were glad to accept the offer, little thinking, perhaps, at the time of the risk they were running in transferring the public creditors into the hands of a grasping trade company. For a time things went well; the spirit of speculation was strong; the shares rose from 130 to 1,000. But this apparent prosperity was pure delusion; the Company's profits were not a quarter large enough to bear the burden. Nevertheless the apparent success led to the starting of many other rival companies, some genuine, some mere bogus companies. Many of these burst before they were two months old and numbers of people were ruined in consequence. Finally a general panic ensued, and the South Sea Company suffered more than any. The shares fell from 1,000 to 135, everyone was anxious to sell and

* For South Sea Scheme, see *Part. Hist.* vol. vii. pp. 697-698.

none to buy. The collapse brought ruin to countless numbers, and to a few, who had been cautious enough to sell early, came large profits. Among these was Walpole. The Bubble burst, and the Company was quite unable to pay Government the £7,000,000 promised for the purchase of the National Debt. A cry of indignation arose, the nation believed that it had been swindled and that the Stanhope ministry was wholly to blame. Many of the ministers were accused of underhand connivance with the schemes of the Company. An enquiry was demanded; Craggs, the Postmaster-General, committed suicide; Stanhope, though probably innocent, in defending himself, fell down in a fit and died; the Chancellor of the Exchequer was expelled from the House.

The only course for Sunderland was to resign, a step which he immediately took.

As Sunderland fell Walpole rose. All eyes were turned on him, for clearly no vestige of suspicion was attached to him. He became First Lord of the Treasury³ and Prime Minister, with Townshend as one of his chief colleagues. The Stanhope ministry fell and Walpole inherited its power. His talent for finance was recognized, he gained the confidence of the nation; his proposals were approved by all parties and by degrees trade settled down and the public credit was restored. But for Walpole's ability and influence the Tories would undoubtedly have had a good chance of gaining power. Walpole saved the Whig party and entered upon his long and remarkable administration. He saved all he could from the wreck of the South Sea Company; it was excused the payment of the £7,000,000, but the management of the National Debt was taken out of its hands.

Sunderland had, at one swoop, lost all his high offices in the State; but as Groom of the Stole and First Gentleman of the Bedchamber he continued to exercise considerable influence over the King. The appointment of Lord Carle-

³ April 3rd, 1721.

ton as President of the Council, although Walpole pressed the candidature of the Duke of Devonshire, was advocated and obtained by Sunderland; and Carteret's nomination as Secretary of State is said to have been due to him.

Jealousy at the growing power of Walpole and Townshend urged Sunderland to intrigue. He secretly made overtures to the Tories. Carteret was his accomplice and forwarded his schemes in the Cabinet. With the help of Carleton and Cadogan they worked for the dismissal of the two rivals. Their means were corrupt, but how far Sunderland's personal feelings were responsible for this is uncertain.⁴ Coxe states that he made proposals to Bishop Atterbury, the most influential leader of the decaying Jacobite faction. Doubtless he would not have hesitated at any step that would have secured his end. His plans, however, whatever they may have been, were cut short by death, April 19, 1722. It occurred at a peculiarly critical moment during the progress of the general election, and raised the suspicion of poison. This was dispelled by a *post-mortem* examination.

"I see by the 'Freeholder,' as well as by your lordship's letter, that Sunderland had some form of religion at his death. But I cannot see for what reason men of his opinion, in which he was so open when he lived, as well as of his manners, should affect to act such a farce at that moment. The best that can be said is that possibly then they may have fears which they never felt before and are willing to catch at any twig."

The general feeling was not one of regret. Even among his colleagues he could never have been said to command respect or admiration. His was a life destitute of fine or noble feelings; his actions were devoid of good motives; he had a lust for personal aggrandisement and personal authority, and, especially towards the latter part of his life, these alone prompted his career.

⁴ Rapin, Continuation, vol. ii. p. 657.

Yet even he became the subject of a eulogistic elegy, handed down to us as another example of the bad verse of the day. Whether written by a genuine admirer, or merely by a second rate poet wishing to try his hand at verse, will remain doubtful. It runs as follows:—

Long since the pacquet brought the dismal news,
Yet for our loss sits silent every muse,
Let no vile pen lament our public woes,
No Grub Street poet dare to interpose.
See how this drooping nation hangs its head
For grief to hear great Sunderland is dead.
Chief of the Spencers' race, by merit known,

and so on for some two dozen lines.

Then came the epitaph:—

Here underneath this marble sleeps
An earl for whom this marble weeps,
Sincerely weeps, as if it knew
His worth as well as I or you.
This marble speaks him good and wise,
Speaks without tongue, weeps without eyes,
And surely marble never lies.
Then look on every tombstone round,
You'll think all virtue underground,
Whate'er men be above, we know
They're Saints and Heroes here below.⁵

At his death all Sunderland's papers relating to politics were examined, in spite of the remonstrance of the Duke of Marlborough.

During the latter years of his life Sunderland had no longer been on good terms with the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. His third marriage and also his connection with the South Sea Bubble had discredited him with the haughty Duchess and through her persuasion Marlborough had opposed the South Sea Bill.

Sunderland's third marriage (in 1717) was to Judith, daughter of Benjamin Tichborne; a lady of Irish extraction and of great fortune. In spite of this he died greatly em-

⁵ *Brit. Mus. Cat.* 11,602, vol. i. 1.

barrassed, owing, among many other debts, £10,000 to his father-in-law. A taste for gambling had proved even more costly than book collecting.

His library was, however, one of the very finest. It was on the site of the Albany that he first housed it; of the original three houses the most eastern was occupied by Sunderland. He subsequently bought the other two and built a very fine room for his books. These were moved to Blenheim in 1749, and numbered upwards of 17,000 volumes. For the mere love of having an unrivalled collection did he gather this number together. The talents which he undoubtedly possessed were flung into the whirlpool of politics, and, although, to a certain degree, devoted to the welfare of his party they were devoted to a far greater degree to the furtherance of his own selfish desires.

Considered either in his political life or in his personal life, it is impossible to admire him. His personality and his career are singularly unattractive. Yet he was one of the Junto, that strong and remarkable band of men, who, owing to their united action, exercised such a strong influence in the reign of Anne, and to whom England almost wholly owed the triumph of the House of Hanover.

